00022825

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

00022825

22825

LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF

COUNT BEUGNOT.

CHAPTER I.

The Countess Lamotte—Account of her Family—Her arrival at Bar-sur-Aube—Her Marriage—Appearance in Paris—Her First Interview with the Cardinal de Rohan—Her *Liaison* with him—The Queen Marie Antoinette—M. Bóranger—Intrigues of Madame de Lamotte.

* * * * At this time occurred an episode in my life which caused me most poignant anxiety, and certainly the greatest sorrow in the course of a career full of vexatious incidents. This arose from the arrival at Paris of the woman afterwards so unhappily celebrated under the name of the Countess de Lamotte.

I must go far back to explain how I became acquainted with her. Mention has elsewhere been made of the rather free style of society meeting in the house of Madame de Surmont at Bar-sur-Aube. One day in the autumn of 1762, it was announced there that two fugitive princesses had made their appearance at the Hôtel de la Tête Rouge; that is to say the most miserable hostel in a town where there is not a single decent one; and we all had a laugh at the notion of princesses in such a place. By the next day, the mists that the princesses had diffused around themselves began to clear; it was

discovered that they had escaped from the convent at Longchamps, and had made their way to Bar-sur-Aube as a central position from whence to direct their endeavours to recover some large possessions that had belonged to their family. This property consisted of the estates of Essoyes, Fontette, and Verpillières. One of these ladies was called Mademoiselle de Valois, the other Mademoiselle de Saint Rémi. This intelligence in some degree modified the first impressions of them. When I went home that evening I mentioned these particulars, and they aroused some recollections in the mind of my father. He remembered that some fifteen or twenty years before he had been obliged to go every year to Essoyes for the assessment of taxes, and when he passed through the parish of Fontette the priest never failed to make a levy on his purse for the poor little Saint Rémi children. There were three of these children left alone in a miserable hovel with a little hole towards the road; and the neighbours conveyed to them by turns through this opening some broth or other simple fare. My father said he had himself seen this, and the priest would not open the door of the hovel for fear of shocking him by the sight of these children, naked, and growing up like savages, saying that his gift would help to clothe them.

My father's story was quite correct. The three children so miserably brought up were the Baron de Valois, who died captain of a frigate, the famous Countess de Lamotte, and Mademoiselle de Saint Rémi, who perhaps is still living as a canoness in some corner of Germany unknown to me. Thus, these last descendants of the Baron de Rémi, a natural son of Henry II., and recognised as such, had fallen into a state of misery approaching to starvation. My father had seen the head of this miserable family, and described

him as a man of powerful frame, living by hunting, by the spoils of the forest, on wild fruits, and even on cultivated ones obtained by theft. The members of the family of Saint Rémi had for two or three generations lived this heroic life, tolerated by the people out of fear, and by the authorities from the celebrity still clinging to a name which had long been famous. This last of the family had not lived long enough to induct his son into his own manner of life; and the village of Fontette contained no Chiron to undertake the education of this new Achilles. He and his sisters fell, in common with other destitute persons, under the care of the priest of the parish. He, poor man, had provided for their subsistence in childhood in some sort of way, as we have seen; but notwithstanding their miserable condition the children grew, their wants increased, and their resources at the utmost remained the same. In this difficulty, the priest implored the interest of La Luzerne, the bishop of Langres, and of the Marquise de Boulainvilliers, wife of the provost of Paris, who lived on an estate not far off. He explained the origin of these children, and was hardly believed. If there were doubts about their nobility, there could be none about their wretchedness. Their most pressing wants were provided for by these two charitable persons who had been consulted; they were clothed; the boy was sent to school at Bar-sur-Seine, and the two girls were put into the Ursuline convent at Ligny, where the board of a young lady of rank at that time amounted to about five pounds per annum. Thus about the end of the eighteenth century, the last natural descendants of the Valois passed into a civilised condition from one of almost savagery.

One thing alone had been preserved amid the wreck of this family; its pedigree. The priest placed it in the hands of the Bishop of Langres, and he sent it for

verification to Chérin, who was then official genealogist to the King.

I knew this official, on account of some distant relationship between us. His examination was most minute, and his opinion unimpeachable. He was profoundly acquainted with the origin of all the great houses, and had he been allowed, would have banished as many nobles from the court as Bollandus did saints from the calendar. I was somewhat posted-up by him, and sometimes when I meet at the Tuileries men who, in all good faith, are proud of their birth, I whisper to myself, "Where are you, Chérin?" Anyhow, he examined this title of the Saint Rémis, and certified to their direct descent in the male line from the Baron of Saint Rémi, natural son of Henry the Second. The pedigree was not quite equal on the female side, for when the Saint Rémis took to the wild life of the ancients, they always married dairy-maids or servants. But that was of no great consequence, since from the beginning of the eighteenth century, inferior marriages seemed to have been fashionable with great families, and at least they could not be reproached with having sold their dignity for riches obtained by doubtful means. They had remained so free from this taint, that there were no marriage settlements for the last three generations, but the certificates of the weddings were quite correct.*

Chérin's certificate was of such authority as to remove all doubts, and then the government came to the rescue. The King granted to the Baron de Valois a pension of 40*l.*, and free admission to the naval school. The girls, besides receiving 24*l.* each, were placed gratuitously in

* In the public papers of April 10, 1867, might be seen—"Died, on Wednesday, at Tours, in his sixty-eighth year, M. Etienne Melchior de Valois de Saint Rémi, late Receiver of Stamps at Tours, son of Charles II. de Valois de Saint Rémi, Baron of Fontette and Essoyes, one of the last direct descendants of Henry II. King of France."

the Abbey of Longchamps, near Paris. The patrons of the family and the director of the king's household had the same views. They hoped that the Baron de Valois would make no objection to take the vows of the order of St. John of Malta. His sisters might be gently persuaded to embrace a religious life, even if it were necessary to hold out the prospect of an abbey for the eldest. Thus would be honourably extinguished a family which could not be more publicly produced without exposing the King to the obligation of furnishing them with a fortune proportionable to their birth. The legitimate Valois were already far enough off; why should an illegitimate branch be raised up? Money is wanted so much for other purposes.

The plan was wise, and would have succeeded, had not the elder Mademoiselle de Saint Rémi been armed by nature with more weapons than were necessary to upset it. The brother had reached the rank of lieutenant in the navy, and the sisters had passed six years at Longchamps, when one fine morning these young ladies made their escape from the convent in search of adventures, with a very light bundle under their arms, and just thirty shillings in their pockets. They intended to go to Bar-sur-Seine, but mistook their way and got into a barge that took them to Nogent; they there found a cheap conveyance that awaited travellers as they left the barge to take them to Bar-sur-Aube, and adopted this means of proceeding. Of their thirty shillings, twenty had been spent on the road; so that they descended at the Tête Rouge, at Bar-sur-Aube, with a crown piece each in their pockets, and their whole wardrobe one change of linen. Madame de Lamotte explained to me how it was that she determined on so sudden a departure. The Abbess who had always previously been obsequious to her, had for some time

past become importunate in her exhortations to her to come to a decision; that is to say, to embrace a religious life. The order of St. Bernard was proposed as the most agreeable and offering the most speedy chance of an abbey; but a religious life had not the smallest attraction for Madame de Lamotte, and besides, she suspected from the persistence of the Abbess, that some more important interest was involved in the desire to make her take the veil, and she interpreted this interest as a dread of the claim she might raise to the family property.

In the miserable hovel where she had found shelter at Fontette, she had conceived great notions of these claims; and these ideas had gained strength from the care afterwards taken of her. The moment for flight was ill chosen, for she had no money; but in her last conversation with her, the Abbess had gone so far as to threaten her. She had no chance but submission or flight; and regardless of consequences she took the latter course. She had no difficulty in persuading her sister, for she had long been used to think for both.

Behold her happily arrived in port! that is to say, at the Tête Rouge Inn, at Bar-sur-Aube, and possessed of five shillings remaining from the expenses of the journey. She had prepared letters to her protectors, and while awaiting their answers, was living on the credit gained by her good looks and high connections, when she received a visit from Madame de Surmont. We had had much trouble in persuading this lady to take this step; but at last we managed to convince her that her position in the town required her to undertake the patronage of young ladies of quality, fugitives, perhaps persecuted, and shamefully deserted by the nobility. We had touched a chord in her heart; she paid a visit to the ladies at the Tête Rouge, and they showed themselves very sensible of

the favour, and greatly delighted to see her. Madame de Surmont returned enchanted with her visit; she had been quite captivated by Mademoiselle de Lamotte, who had proved that she was able to captivate others also. She was inclined to take the girls into her house, if her husband approved; and kept on expatiating on the indifference of the nobility in a case in which the interests of relatives of the King were involved. Her husband as usual reluctantly yielded; and the Demoiselles de Saint Rémi were installed in the house. This was the object we desired to obtain.

Madame de Lamotte was not strictly beautiful; she was of medium height, but slight and well formed; her blue eyes, which were surmounted by black arched eyebrows, were full of expression; her face was rather long, the mouth wide, but with beautiful teeth, and like many people of that style, she had an enchanting smile. Her hand was pretty, and her feet very small, her complexion remarkably fair. By a curious freak, nature, when forming her throat, had stopped when half was done; and that half made one long for the rest. She was destitute of any sort of information, but she had a great deal of intelligence, and was very quick and penetrating. She braved the laws of social order, with which she had been at war from her birth, and did not pay much more attention to those of morality. She might be heard making game of both, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, and as if she had no notion of their existence. Thus, was composed a being formidable to a close observer, but captivating to the generality of those who looked from a greater distance.

The sister, Mademoiselle de Saint Rémi, was a large handsome girl; very fair, very insipid, very dull; with just enough instinct to perceive that she was a great lady, but always ready to descend from her position.

The exterior of the Baron de Valois was ordinary, and his mind not enlarged; but he was a sensible man, and an attentive officer. He was fond of his profession, and devoted himself to it without permitting the remembrances and hopes, nursed by his sister, to distract him from it.

He died during the course of her trial, and not without some suspicion that he could not bear to await the conclusion of it. Such was the family that met their end amid crime and disgrace, while attempts had been made to render their lives pleasant and honourable.

The Saint Rémi young ladies brought movement and life into the society of Madame de Surmont. The young people who formed a part of it, soon perceived that these ladies had much in common with the princesses of romance, and were not a bit more cruel. After due consideration, they would have been persuaded to condescend if some rich citizens, sincerely attached to them, had aspired to the honour of their hands. The recovery of the immense property of the family was retarded by delays, the termination of which could not be foreseen. Meanwhile, all they had to subsist on was the pension of twenty-four pounds a year, a sum on which it was impossible to live, and they feared that Madame de Surmont might grow weary of the daily sacrifices imposed on her by her imprudent patronage.

The day after their arrival at her house, she had lent the girls, in their pressing need, two white dresses, without the least expectation that they would wear them long, since the good lady's figure was a stout one. What was her surprise to see next morning that these dresses became them beautifully! The fact was, the girls had spent the night in cutting them down and altering them. They used the same licence in everything, and Madame de Surmont began to find that

the easy condescensions of the princesses carried them too far.

It was intended that the Saint Rémi young ladies, should not at the outside, pass more than a week at Madame de Surmont's; they remained there a year. Time passed as it does in a little country town; in quarrels and reconciliations, in trifling gossip and solemn talk, in contriving and frustrating frightful intrigues, things that never pass the walls of the city, if it has any. The genius of the elder Mademoiselle de St. Rémi found, nevertheless, scope for its development in this narrow circle. She was playing a prelude while waiting for her part. She had taken possession of the mind of M. de Surmont, and by the help of the blind attachment conceived for her by this good man, many of the aspersions she cast on all comers, and Madame de Surmont in particular, were counterbalanced. The poor hostess has often told me that the most unhappy year of her life was that which she spent in the society of that demon.

I had seen little of her when she came to Bar-sur-Aube, but enough to be fascinated like the rest. Without being aware of the danger, I admired this brave spirit that was checked by nothing, and contrasted so curiously with the timid and narrow character of the other ladies in the town. Besides, she knew how to assume, on occasion, the softness and even the weakness of her sex. She had youth, beautiful eyes, and her smile went to the heart. This was more than was requisite to make me her vassal. I was inexhaustible in her praise. The year that the Demoiselles de Saint Rémi came to live at Bar-sur-Aube, my father for the first time in his life, hastened my departure for Paris, for he had a deadly horror of the unheard-of honour of uniting his blood to the remains of that of Valois.

My correspondents kept me informed of the life that

these ladies passed, and of their amiable tricks. I learned that at last the elder Saint Rémi had particularly distinguished M. de Lamotte, nephew of M. de Surmont. They told me that at last this lofty spirit had found its master; but I was a little surprised at the quarter where it had gone in search of him.

M. de Lamotte was an ugly man, but well made, expert in all bodily exercises, and notwithstanding his plainness, his face had a sweet and amiable expression. What spirit he had—and he was not without it—had hitherto been directed towards inferior adventures. He was of noble blood, and the third of his name who had served in the gendarmes. His father, a knight of Saint Louis, and a quarter-master general of the army, had been killed at the battle of Minden. Destitute of any sort of fortune, he had talents enough to plunge himself in debt, and only lived on his wits and on a pension of fifteen pounds which M. de Surmont, his uncle, was obliged to allow him in order to keep him in the corps.

At the present day, there is a risk of not being understood when speaking of the gendarmes, in which M. de Lamotte served. The corps preserved the ancient standard of the gendarmes so renowned in former times, when an armed man and horse were a real power. Up to the year 1787 (when it was abolished), it was the first cavalry regiment of France. The simple troopers held the rank of officers, and as such, obtained the cross of Saint Louis. But it was the refuge of the poor nobility, and likewise received citizens who could not make way in other corps of the army. The force maintained the most brilliant reputation for bravery; but, as the private troopers did much the same duties as the soldiers of any other regiment, there was but little respect paid to them individually. The very junior sub-lieutenant of infantry considered himself above a gendarme. M. de Lamotte

might have been an exception, because his name recommended him for promotion, had his conduct been good; but of all the means of success, good conduct was that of which he was least capable.

In the course of the same month I heard that the marriage of the elder Saint Rémi with M. de Lamotte was not a mere joke, then that the marriage was determined on, and moreover with the consent of the Bishop of Langres, and at last that the wedding was celebrated. Each of these pieces of news as it arrived redoubled my surprise, and it reached its height when I learnt that the very next month Madame de Lamotte had given birth to twin boys, who only survived a few days. The last circumstance reduced to the class of very common events a marriage that up to that time had appeared so strange. All was explained, even to the approval of the Bishop of Langres, which was on the prelate's side only a forced consent.

Madame de Surmont had been deceived to the end by her nephew and Mademoiselle de Saint Rémi; and as soon as she knew of the insult they had offered to her house, she forbade the former to come thither, and sent off the latter. They took refuge with Madame Latour, a sister of M. de Lamotte, who herself having very little to live on could not long support her two visitors.

Mademoiselle de Saint Rémi had given two years of her pension for fifty pounds, and with these did her best to take her share of the display required by the nuptial ceremony. M. de Lamotte sold for the same purpose, for twenty-four pounds in ready money, a horse and carriage that he had bought on credit at Luneville. Thus did they commence house-keeping.

After the children were born and they had time to review their position, it was evident that it was one of great difficulty. There was no course that Madame de

Lamotte could adopt but to run the risk of a journey to Paris, the receptacle of all the wealth and all the misery of France. They had no money and very little credit, but had the good fortune to manage to borrow fifty pounds from my father, who had not forgotten the poor children of Fontette, to whom he had given a few crowns as alms, and besides, he rather gloried in a few such acts of generosity. He liked Mademoiselle de Saint Rémi as soon as he was sure she would never be his daughter-in-law. He had beheld her marriage with such perfect satisfaction, that he would have been glad to have defrayed the whole expenses.

I have already spoken ill of Madame de Lamotte, and shall have more to say; but I wish to be entirely just. Her gratitude towards my father was perfect; and she never spoke of him and of the service he had rendered to her without emotion. In her brief moments of wealth, she not only returned the sum that had been lent to her, but my father was even twice obliged to return to her a box intended, as she said, for payment of interest, and worth nearly as much as the capital.

The sum total of the loan was justly, that is to say, equally, divided between Monsieur and Madame de Lamotte. The husband took twenty-five pounds, and went to Fontette to engage in proceedings for recovering possession of the property of the house of Saint Rémi, and Madame de Lamotte went to Paris with a like sum to utilise her husband's discoveries. On her arrival she stopped in the Rue de la Verricia, at the Hôtel de Reims, a kind of inn, of about as good reputation as the Tête Rouge, at Bar-sur-Aube.

From that place I received one morning a note from Madame de Lamotte to tell me of her arrival, and informing me that she had brought a letter from my father and wished to deliver it the same day. I had more than

one reason for haste, and went to her immediately. By her permission I then read my father's letter, which contained an expression of real interest in Madame de Lamotte. My father wished me to consider carefully whether her claim was well-founded, and, if it was, to do all in my power to assist her. He added, that the lady was very amiable (I had known it before he did), that she was aware of the unfortunate position in which she had placed herself, and it would be inhuman to desert her. He told me nothing about the charity that had prompted him to a loan of fifty pounds.

I took the matter into serious consideration, as my father wished. I gave a scheme for a search for titles in the public archives of the places where the property of the Saint Rémi family had been situated, and I employed myself in investigations in the archives of the Rolls Office in Paris. I easily found the letters-patent of Henry II.; conferring on his natural son, the lands, the recovery of which was claimed; but I could not discover on the file any deed that had made these deeds pass from the hands of Saint Rémi into those of different owners not of the same family. The last of them was a M. Orceau of Fontette, superintendent of Caen, who had restored them to the King by way of exchange; a circumstance very favourable to our claim, as the King had only to open his hand in order to restore the fortune of their father to the Saint Rémis. Perhaps it might have been obtained, had the children come forward under other auspices, and had they succeeded in interesting some influential personage in their claims.

My efforts were thankless. M. de Lamotte did not understand a single word of what I wanted of him. In his eyes a first step to success would have been a kind of triumphal entry into the places which had witnessed the extreme misery of the earlier years of his wife. He had

already thought fit to have a *Te Deum* sung there; and on leaving the church he had scattered money among the people,—so much deducted from the twenty-five pounds intended for the expenses of his travels and researches. His wife in Paris was not any better inclined to listen to reason. When I told her of what I had done, and what I wished to do, of the obstacles and difficulties, she shrugged her shoulders and accused me of conducting her business like an attorney. She thought the business quite a simple affair; the lands of Essoyes, Fontette, and Verpillières had belonged to her ancestors, that was proved. At this day they are said to be in the hands of the King. What matters that? One takes one's property wherever it can be found. There is nothing more to be done than to take possession, and inform M. de Lamotte how that is to be done. If I had not sense enough to find out, she would undertake it herself and forward instructions to her husband. This made me tremble with fear, for I knew she was just as capable of directing acts of folly as her husband was of executing them.

When M. de Lamotte had exhausted his means in feasts, *Te Deums*, and donations to the people, a process which was not very long, he went back to Bar-sur-Aube to his sister's, just as far advanced in his business as if he had never gone away, but minus twenty-five pounds. He sent to Paris a list of three or four professional men residing on the spot, with whom I might communicate on certain details into which a man of his quality could not enter. I laughed with compassion, and informed his wife that I repudiated the honour of such a correspondence. Thus ended all researches in the localities.

At Paris we made more progress. I had composed a statement by no means devoid of interest. I represented

as an additional insult of fortune to the house of Valois, the fate of a branch derived from the ancient tree that had so long covered France and other states of Europe with its regal shade. My production was interspersed with such philosophical reflections as were very much the fashion at that time, and I begged of the Bourbons to pay the debts of the persons whose magnificent inheritance they had received. I submitted my composition to M. Elie de Beaumont, a celebrated advocate and man of taste, whom the bar consulted on any production that departed from the beaten paths. M. Elie de Beaumont had the goodness to read my work, and did me the still greater kindness of pointing out some useful corrections. He told me it was a pity that such a matter could not be brought before the Parliament of Paris, as it would be enough to make me a name. But I did not even get the honour of being in print for my pains. The question was said to lie in the province of royal favour, and it would have been an offence against the respect due to the King to print anything! I made many attempts to alter the arrangement in more than one way, but never managed to take the business out of that province where all publicity was considered a want of respect to the King. I was much raised in Madame de Lamotte's estimation by this memorial; she thought the city was already taken by storm; but the advocate did not share in his client's confidence. I always said that credit, powerful friends, and money were requisites for success, and all these were lacking. I nevertheless composed another memorial to the King, or rather another petition, which I endeavoured to make very short, so that it might be read to him by the persons who undertook to present it, and possibly by the King himself. But alas! Madame de Lamotte commenced her shameless intrigues with the production of my muse in her hand! My only consola-

tion is, that at least my petition was not employed in the negotiations about the necklace.

These labours took up much of my time during the summer of 1783. Madame de Lamotte continued to inhabit the Hôtel de Reims, and had very good reasons for not leaving it. Her credit then had remarkably diminished, and two loans of ten pounds each that I had made her at different times had not done much to raise it. I could not invite her to dine with me at home, as I did not keep house, but once or twice a week she favoured me by accepting a dinner at the Cadran Bleu, and astonished my youthful eyes by her appetite. On other days she had recourse to my arm for a walk that always led to a café. She had a remarkable taste for good beer, but never in any place seemed to find any that came amiss to her. In the intervals, which were so frequent that I could not help perceiving that she must have made a light dinner, if she had dined at all—she ate two or three dozen biscuits!

One morning I beheld Madame de Lamotte arrive in a glow of joy; she had obtained, by favour of Madame de Boulainvilliers, an audience of the grand almoner, the Cardinal de Rohan. The audience was appointed for noon on the next day, and she came to ask me for three things in a great hurry: my carriage, my servant to attend her, and my arm to support her. "All this," she said to me, "is indispensable, according to your principle that in this country there are only two good ways of begging—at the church doors, and in a carriage." I agreed, and so did not raise any difficulty on the two former heads; but I refused my arm, because I could not present myself before the Cardinal with her in the character of her advocate, unless his Eminence had been informed of it and given his permission. This was found to be correct; and it was agreed on, as a middle course,

that I should go with her, but that she should put me down at the Prince de Soubise's garden, and come for me again when she had left the palace of the Cardinal. All was done as proposed, and the grand almoner's first interview with Madame de Lamotte lasted half-an-hour. She came out full of hope, his Eminence had promised to use his influence to support the claim of the Saint Rémi family. He had read the petition to the King twice, and could not recover from his surprise at the Court leaving the descendants of Henry II. destitute. He had touched on the point of assistance, but gently, and with delicacy, and Madame de Lamotte assured me that she had followed the advice I gave her, not to spoil this first interview by the spectacle of her degradation and mendicancy.

Some days went by. I had retired into my study, and demanded from Madame de Lamotte a respite even from our walks, because I had to compose a memorial in a very important cause that was to be decided in the Session between several parishes of the Duchy of Nevers and the Duke. The feudal rights that were at least doubtful, were exercised by the agent of that nobleman with incredible harshness. For two years I had been working at the suit, and an abstract carefully drawn was required of me, in which I was to make a kind of appeal to the Duke of Nevers himself, to his kindness of heart from the harsh behaviour of his superintendents. It is the nature of my mind to be quite absorbed in whatever I am about, and to detest interruptions. Add to this defect that of myself undertaking what I could have set others to do, and the secret will be explained of the crowd of enemies that I gratuitously made myself when I was in any high position, composed of all those with whose interruptions I had sometimes been impatient. I even acquired a reputation for laziness, when I was spending whole nights

1 00

in my office; yet not without some reason, for while I was engaged on memorials and reports, portfolios would be lying in heaps around me. I had never appreciated the words of M. de Choiseul, "A minister's inkstand is full enough when there is sufficient to sign his name with." The origin of this defect was in the avocations of my earlier years; for whatever may be said of it now-a-days, the education acquired by mixing in the world is necessary to those who are intended to fill high posts. I brought to office my old inclination and habit of writing on any given subject, and of finishing my work with care; thus acting as if I were earnestly pursuing my career at the bar. A real statesman disdains such habits, or at least looks down on them.

I was fully absorbed in my memorial against the Duke de Nevers, when one day Madame de Lamotte came to me in a fresh outburst of rejoicing; she had received a note from the Cardinal, asking her to go to his palace. The style was affectionate, but not forgetful of his dignity. The three things found to be so useful in the former visit were again requested; but on that day I was not inclined to grant them. I had but little faith in the success of the affair in which I had embarked. In a word, I was interrupted, and as usual the occasion of the interruption was ill received.

Some days elapsed before I saw her again; meanwhile she carried her complaints to Madame de Crozat, of whom I have already had occasion to speak. She described me as a capricious person, one day all fire, the next all ice, saying even that I sometimes used her very ill; as an instance, she stated that the last time she had been to see me, I had almost turned her out of my study. Madame de Lamotte had for some time been in the habit of applying to Madame de Crozat for the small loans that were indispensable, to prevent her from being turned

out of her inn, even though she could not maintain herself in it in a manner suitable to her position.

Madame de Crozat was aware of the faults of Madame de Lamotte, and feared the viciousness of her disposition as much as I did, but always wound up by the same chorus, "She is so important! who knows if we were in her place, whether we should be better than she is?"

It was arranged that I should go to dinner with Madame de Crozat on the next Sunday; that Madame de Lamotte should be there, and that peace should be made between us under the auspices of the mistress of the house. At the Sunday dinner Madame de Lamotte was amiable to the company, and only polite to me. I thought I saw some marks of satisfaction in her expression and manner; a little *hauteur* could be perceived in her, and instead of waiting for me to take her home as usual at seven o'clock in the evening, she asked for a carriage and departed alone; thence I concluded that her business had made some progress in her second visit to the Cardinal. I was foolish enough to be almost jealous, and especially curious about the details. Next day I was at her bed-side, and required an explanation. I wished to know if she had delivered the great memorial to the Cardinal; if his Eminence had promised to address himself to Monsieur de Bonnaire de Forges, the superintendent at that time in charge of the property; if he would aid the request with a liberal supply from the available funds of the Grand Almoner's chest. She only gave general replies to all these particular questions: namely, that the Cardinal was an excellent man, devoted to her, and would do all that was asked of him.

When I insisted on previously settling the questions that were to be put to him, I was told to be without

apprehension, that business could not be conducted with a Cardinal in the same way as with an attorney, but that all was going right. She added that she had a little afterwards obtained an interview with the Marshal de Richelieu, and that he, ever amiable and gallant, had given her so charming a reception that she founded many hopes on that quarter. Madame de Lamotte was thus placed in a position between the oldest and the most awkward courtier of the age. A little advocate could scarcely find place among them! I considered this the moment for my retreat; but in order to learn at once how much credit I still possessed, I proposed a dinner at the Cadran Bleu for the next Wednesday, and it was accepted.

At this dinner, I found Madame de Lamotte in her best spirits, but she expended them in sneers at our common acquaintance and at myself. I tried in vain to bring her back to more serious considerations; I saw that she had made up her mind to eat my dinner and to mystify me. I became angry, and threatened to leave her to her folly; she answered quite gaily, that she wanted no more of me. I frowned, and she saw I was on the point of making my escape, so she took the trouble to explain to me that I had been very useful to her in clearing up her business, writing memorials and petitions, in doing everything, in a word, that pertained to the office of an advocate; but she had now reached a point when she required counsels of a different nature. She wanted those who could tell her how to get at the Queen and the Comptroller-general, who would know equally well what to do, and what to avoid; in a word, who could set a pretty little intrigue on foot, and manage to make it successful. Then I had to hear from her mouth, and without a wry face, that on all these points I was the most incapable of men. She had already

taken some steps without me or my advice. The position of her husband was ridiculous in the eyes of the world, and therefore an obstacle; so she had made him leave the gendarmerie, and enter the guards of the Count d'Artois as a supernumerary. This was a kind of stepping-stone which could be avowed, while the footing of a gendarme would not bear mention; besides, she could now find means of having her husband brought to Versailles on duty, and at any rate he would not make so foolish an exhibition of himself there as in the country. She intended also to establish herself there with the view of seizing on all the means of success, and especially of interesting the Queen in her favour. This was the first occasion on which she pronounced the name of her sovereign in my presence.

I agreed that there was some truth, and even some advantage, in all this, and especially praised her resolution of quitting this dirty Hôtel de Reims, and settling herself at Versailles; but I entreated her to be very cautious about the people she would find around her, and to have no confidence in the professional busy-bodies seeking their fortunes in the streets of that city, and always ready both to advise and to execute whatever ought not to be done. I reserved my goodwill and zeal in her service for any occasion when she might have some lawsuit, and until then I would trouble her neither with my advice nor with what she was pleased to term my illegible scrawls. Madame de Lamotte had not forgotten these words when, less than two years afterwards, she wrote to me, from the depths of the Bastille, to claim the performance of my promise, and request me to defend her in her unfortunate affair.

From that time forward I ceased to pour forth my wise and very useful advice to Madame de Lamotte, or to employ

myself about her business; but did not give up her society. That very evening I took her to the Comédie Italienne, to a performance of "Richard Cœur-de-Lion," and we parted quietly, neither too much pleased nor dissatisfied with one another. A few days afterwards, I heard from a man of whom I hired carriages (who came to inform me of a bill for some days' hire to Madame de Lamotte, which I had guaranteed), that she had gone to Versailles; and I felt some anxiety as to whom she got the money from. The last loan from Madame de Crozat had been as much as six weeks before. She had been discreet enough long before to cease her attacks upon my little store. By mere chance I found out that she had received a grant of a hundred pounds from the office of the Grand Almoner; which was in fact a natural and fair apportionment of part of the sum yearly provided for charitable purposes by the King. I reconsidered the great distance between Monsieur le Cardinal de Rohan and Madame de Lamotte, and blamed myself for having so lightly suspected a close intimacy between them.

When she got to Versailles, Madame de Lamotte fell into all the snares that I had endeavoured to warn her against; she was speedily surrounded by those palpable rogues who, driven from every honourable career, seek for intrigues, succeed in finding them, and thrive upon them as best they may. Madame de Lamotte brought a name and a misfortune into the game; the others took the trouble to play the cards. Without any difficulty in persuading her, they made this unhappy woman act in the most extravagant way. Only to mention one: she one day pretended to faint away in Madame's* waiting-room. They had provided a confederate in the house-

* The Countess of Provence, wife to the King's eldest brother.

hold, who told the Princess that a lady of quality was dying of hunger in her waiting-room. Madame, in the first impulse of her pity, sent her ladies to the assistance of the lady of quality, had her petition brought to her, read it, and sent her a gift of some pounds. But when another attempt was made to reach the Princess, she suspected the trick employed to get at her the first time, and would not allow Madame de Lamotte's name to be mentioned in her presence. An attempt in equally bad taste was not more successful with the Countess d'Artois. Madame de Lamotte saw neither the one nor the other of the Princesses during her first stay at Versailles, no man in office, nor indeed any honourable person. She sowed her petitions broad-cast in the hands of those false pretenders to credit to whom no request is refused, only because they are never allowed to make one, and in a very short time she had managed to bring discredit both on herself and on her business.

A painful reflection must be made here, and one which forms a key to the romance of Madame de Lamotte. The Queen had at that time a reputation, doubtless never deserved, for lightness of conduct; she was supposed to be in difficulties on account of the scarcity of money caused by her extravagance. Words and incidents connected with her were mentioned, that reduced her from the position of Queen to that of a woman in love. The latter characteristic became familiar in thought and modes of expression. The people of the Court, who permitted themselves greater liberties, excited this imagination in other classes. The Queen was no longer the great lady of Versailles, standing above suspicion or curiosity. Marie Leczinska, though she attained this high rank, almost by a miracle, had maintained the dignity of it, but it seemed as if, when she died, she had carried away the model.

Before the appearance of Madame de Lamotte, there had been other intriguing women, who made experiments on this dangerous tendency of mind. A lady called Cahouette de Villiers, who by chance had obtained an opportunity of reaching the presence of the Queen, and obtaining some favours from her inexhaustible kindness, ended by selling much more than she dared ask for. Her sale of imaginary influence was cut short by a *lettre de cachet*,—but an example had been set. A little while afterwards one of the Queen's women went to Monsieur Béranger, the receiver-general, pretending she had been sent by her mistress, to ask a loan of sixteen hundred pounds. She said he had been named to the Queen as an excellent serviceable man, and in her clever deception she repeated to Monsieur Béranger expressions actually employed by Her Majesty, imitating, to give a greater appearance of truth, the slightly German accent of which the royal lady had never been able to free herself. Monsieur Béranger asked for two lines, or even one word written by the Queen; he was told that on such terms the Queen could get millions, and more; that there was no question of notes or writing, nor indeed of a loan, but of a momentary service for which the Queen desired to be indebted only to his confidence in her. Monsieur Béranger relinquished his demand for her hand-writing, but required that at least the Queen should say a word, or give a sign, and humbly represented that the matter was worth so much trouble. The clever rogue complained of his want of confidence, seemed desirous to break off the treaty, and said the Queen would find a hundred willing to do the service, the refusal of which she had secured for him with some difficulty. Monsieur Béranger finally reduced his demand to a sign, or a nod, as she went along the gallery.

Madame L—— agreed to this, and told him to come

to mass next Sunday, and to sit under the third arch on the same side as the Queen, as it would thus be easier for her to give him some signal by a motion of her head, than when walking amid her suite. Madame L—— made up a story for the Queen of the strange head-dresses that two of the court ladies meant to wear that day at mass, adding that she intended to station herself under the third arch, to see the effect of the masquerade the better. Her Majesty declared that it was impossible. Madame L—— contrived that a hint should be conveyed to these ladies that the Queen would have, on next Sunday, an entirely new head-dress, which she was determined to render fashionable, and gave them the ridiculous design with which she had amused Her Majesty. The ladies were caught in the snare, and the more absurd they thought the mode, the more eager were they to adopt it. On Sunday all the actors were at their posts. M. Béranger was under the third arch, and Madame L—— placed herself behind him. The Queen appeared. She at once observed the two ladies of the Court who had been mentioned to her. As soon as she saw the first of them she turned her eyes to the third arch, where her waiting-maid was, and smiled at her, nodding her head in assent; when she saw the other, the gesture was repeated in a more marked manner. Poor M. Béranger took it all to himself. Madame L—— smiled, and said to him, "You will not doubt any more; I told the Queen you were hard of belief, and she has done it twice over to convince you." M. Béranger, without any more hesitation, charged Madame L—— to make his excuses to Her Majesty, and gave her the £1600, with which the swindler escaped to England that very night with her lover.

These adventures were known to the public before that of the necklace. They made sensible men sigh,

amused the thoughtless, and were a continual source of emulation for rogues and tricksters. I often heard the last story told, but no one really expressed indignation at it. Poor M. Béranger was the victim who was everywhere immolated, while Madame L—— was considered a wonderfully clever woman, and was very near being held up as an example. Such were the manners of a time that I hear daily regretted by men who proclaim themselves religious and royalists *par excellence.* Imagine Madame de Lamotte arrived at Versailles, dying of hunger, without fixed principles of any kind; believing herself justified in attempting anything against a social order that had robbed her of everything, and cast into those abysses of civilisation, where elegant rogues narrate, praise, and extol horrors that are merely laughed at even in good society. The education in evil of such a woman, who was already debauched, was soon to be quickly brought to perfection. Besides, she met at Versailles, and soon made friends with a man called Villette, a fellow gendarme of her husband's. This Villette was not such a fool as his brother; indeed, a little smattering of literature and the arts made him superior to his comrades. His youthful extravagance had soon consumed his inheritance; and the debts which he left behind him in every place did not permit him to stay long in any town; so he migrated between Paris and Versailles, and no one could say how he lived.

Subtle and insinuating by nature, the condition of the poor devil had in no respect altered his character; it had even taught him to give a mild approval, in the most polished terms, to the dirtiest methods of getting out of a scrape, and he was always ready to make use of them. He was the Philintas of rogues.

This was the wretch who forged, or thought he forged the Queen's handwriting every time that Madame de

Lamotte required this service of him. After her first journey to Versailles, Madame de Lamotte raised Villette to the rank of secretary, and the notes and letters that she was supposed to dictate to him, were not devoid either of cleverness or of a certain gracefulness.

CHAPTER II.

My Vacation in Champagne—Visit of Madame Lamotte—M. de Latour—Conversation at Supper—Madame de Lamotte's Relations with Society—Her Plate and Jewelry—Supposed Source of Madame de Lamotte's Opulence—Portrait of the Cardinal de Rohan—His Letters to Madame de Lamotte—My Career at the Bar—M. d'Ambray—MM. Séguier, d'Aguesseau, and Joly de Fleury—Course of the Lyceum—Picture of France in 1785—Cagliostro—Credulity of Madame de Latour.

I LEFT Paris to spend the vacation in Champagne, without having seen Madame de Lamotte again, and did not much regret it. I had had proof that it was impossible to keep her in the ways of wisdom and prudence, and I was quite in despair when I heard of the persons by whom she was surrounded at Versailles, and of her first dissipations. When I came to Bar-sur-Aube, numbers came to question me about Madame de Lamotte, but I only answered with great reserve. I gave a detailed account of her to my father alone, and made him understand that no one who possessed the slightest self-respect could meddle with the affairs of his *protégée*.

My vacations passed pleasantly enough; I returned every year to my native city with an increase of gravity. I no longer confined myself to the company at Madame de Surmont's, but consented even occasionally to undergo the weariness of a ball. I was beginning to hold in some esteem the modest and rather stern virtues there displayed, when I received a very friendly letter from Madame de Lamotte, telling me that, as she had a few leisure days at her disposal, she was coming to spend

them at Bar-sur-Aube with her friends. She told me quite easily, as if it were a matter of course, that she had sent on her luggage cart and led horses, which would spend five days on the road, as she had given strict orders that they should not be hurried, and she would arrive two days later. In nearly the same terms she informed her sister-in-law that she was coming, and only ordered some special arrangements to be made for the lodging of herself and household. Madame de Latour hurried to my house in a state of amazement, and asked me what it meant.

I said I knew no more than she did. We compared our despatches, and agreed that there was a mystery beneath it, and that of the worst kind. We both determined not to be cajoled; she would not make any preparation to accommodate the princess or her train, and we would both say nothing about the letters we had received.

But what was our surprise when we saw a well-filled baggage cart arrive on the day named, drawn by good horses, and followed by two valuable ones in hand. There could be no longer any uncertainty, nor was there any means of retreat. For the accommodation of what had arrived, and what was said to be coming, the owner of a house of some size was turned out; and rooms were hastily prepared. A *maître-d'hôtel*, who arrived with the baggage cart, sent out requisitions for more victuals than would be wanted to provision the best house in the place for six months. People stared at each other as they met in the street, and wondered what would be the appendix to the "Arabian Nights," when Monsieur and Madame de Lamotte, preceded by two couriers, arrived in a very elegant open carriage, and had no sooner alighted than they sent to ask me to supper.

My father, wise as he was, allowed himself to be

caught by appearances, and was inwardly pleased to find my prudence at fault. "My son," said he, "you have the ill luck of judging very hastily, indeed, too much so. Because what you wrote for Madame de Lamotte was not valued by her, you have, as you yourself confess, treated her harshly. Perhaps I know as much about rights of property as you do, and I have never thought it impossible that she might regain the family estates. A great advance has been made, for I am told the Queen takes an interest in her. You stick to that wretched Latour, whom I never see, for he would speak evil of the Divinity Himself were He here on earth. Do not share his wickedness, and show yourself what you should never have ceased to be to Madame de Lamotte, respectful and devoted. Poor child!" said my father, in a melting moment, "when I think of the trifles of crowns that I gave to the priest of Fontette, to help to clothe her!"

M. de Latour, with whom my father had ceased to have intercourse, because nothing was too sacred for his tongue, was indeed the scourge of the country by his *bon-mots* and sneers.

He was a man of great wit of the best style, when he liked, speaking gracefully, and with the remarkable power of extracting absurdity from subjects in which none but himself would have suspected its existence. It is true, that no sort of considerations deterred him.

After all, he was a man of honour, incapable of a base action; but what was not much better, always ready to indulge in mischievous talk. The fortune of his life had fixed him, I know not how, at Bar-sur-Aube, and he had made a prosperous marriage there, taking to wife the sister of M. de Lamotte. He was out of place, for Paris would have been his true sphere, where such a man would indeed have been detested, but would have been much sought after.

I was alone with him in Madame de Lamotte's house, the day she came. He accosted me with a loud laugh, in which he was determined that I should join. "Have I not excellent cause," he said, "for always declaring that Paris contains some of the most stupid people in the world? In what other country, I ask you, could this little fury and her lanky husband have managed to raise what they are coming to display to us here? You know the lady; besides, no one can be half an hour with her without having more than enough of her lies and low insults. As for the husband, he is a gendarme, fit enough to carry his bundle of hay from the forage store to the stable, but ask no more from him. Except your good father, the princess, with all her attractions, and the prince with his genius, would not have found anyone here to lend them a shilling, and yet in half an hour they have unpacked more plate than there is in the whole town, not excepting the chalices and altar plate. Oh Paris, the sanctuary of rogues and fools! I salute you once more for this additional miracle."

"Have done!" I said. "After all, they are your own connections; you are going to sup with them, and you know it is said that the Queen protects Madame de Lamotte?"

"I am their connection, therefore the business sticks to me like pitch; for when I have had a good laugh at this show, perhaps I shall be condemned to cry over it, and you know my natural aversion for that kind of grimace. As for their supper, however good it may be, you and I are doing them great honour by going to eat it. I cannot give you any answer on the point of the Queen's protection. Between ourselves, I suspect that the spouse of our sovereign lord the King is not the most prudent woman in the world; but I beg her pardon, she is not foolish enough to be infatuated by this sort of people. Well! let us make the best supper we can, and

above all, do not let us seem to be the least astonished at this display. That is the best way to fill the hearts of our friends with rage."

A supper was sent up that would have seemed splendid in Paris for any sort of guests. We were eight, including the hosts. Though Bar-sur-Aube was one of the ancient cities of the Gauls, never, perhaps, had such luxury been displayed within it, not even when Cæsar, as it is said, did it the honour of halting in it to hang the Mayor and Town Council of the day. Latour and I were steady to our plan, ate heartily, and without noticing our fare, as if we were used to such feasts, we took pains to keep the conversation upon such matters that the most adroit talker could not introduce into it praise of what was before us. M. de Lamotte could not endure this, for he wanted to make us all admire his dinner-service, which was finely worked, and some pieces of which were of novel use. Latour declared that they had been known long ago, but given up as inconvenient. The *nil admirari* was sustained throughout.

At last, Madame de Lamotte thought she would find favour in our eyes by praising a very fine fowl that had just been removed, telling us that she had given orders to have provisions sent by mail while she stayed at Bar-sur-Aube, for, to her taste, the poultry in the neighbourhood was not fit to eat. "I beg your pardon, Madame, but I think very differently," said Latour, seriously. "I think a country capon, as you have just now called it, fatted under the care, and a little by the very hands of Madame Latour, and better still of Madame de Saumont, superior to all your cockerels and pullets of Normandy, and Le Mans; for their flesh is soft, insipid, and distasteful; but after the capon has been reared in a good place, he must be well roasted, and for this purpose, I do not think much of the jack, but much prefer

to have the spit turned by one of the little boys of the family, or a stranger, or even by a dog."

Madame de Lamotte lost patience on hearing the honours of her husband's relatives thus displayed before four great scamps they had brought from Paris, in liveries, laced all over. "Sir," said she to Latour, in a spiteful tone, "I am edified by your preference, it is a rustic taste, and you drive it too far."

"I entirely agree," replied Latour, "country taste, or family taste, come much the same. You know, Madame, that I take as little account of one as the other."

The supper was shortened by this conversation. Latour quietly asked me, "How do you think I have paid my scot?" "You have been almost vulgarly literal." "No, but I was determined to put down either husband or wife, if they should have the impudence to hold up anything to my admiration. The masquerade that has begun to-night is a sort of triumph to those people, and mine is the post of the soldier who used to cast wholesome truths at the hero of the triumphal procession."

Madame de Lamotte made me come into her room, and complained of the insulting tone of her husband's brother-in-law. She told me that her luck had changed, that she was now in a fortunate position, both for herself and her friends, and it would be as well for all of us to adopt another tone towards her. She let fall a little about very high acquaintance whom she possessed at Versailles, and ended by telling me that she hardly knew whether she could give us the fortnight she had promised. I gave her a specimen of the different tone she had desired to see adopted, by not allowing myself to question her on any point; I only promised to endeavour to prevail on her brother-in-law to be more reserved, but I did not expect much success.

Two days after, she paid a round of visits, dressed with such taste as excessive ostentation could suggest, and sparkling with diamonds. Except for this absurdity, she made herself agreeable everywhere, and displayed familiarity with the nobility. Great and small were enchanted, and her visits were punctually returned, but when she wished to go a step farther and give some little entertainments, the respectable ladies of the town excused themselves under different pretexts, and Madame de Lamotte was reduced to young men, and to the ladies of her husband's family; so perfect was the respect for morality, at this time, in a little country town. These good ladies said to me, "Madame de Lamotte is charming, and we love her from the bottom of our hearts, but why should you wish us to give our daughters notions they ought not to have, and perhaps, awake in their minds, desires that can never be gratified?" I was perfectly respectful and discreet with Madame de Lamotte. She seemed to have quite forgotten the terms on which we had formerly been, and I was well content to do so. I had assumed the position of a civil man to whom she could talk. So, she told me the secret mortifications she experienced in her stay at Bar-sur-Aube, and spoke of the miserable tone of her husband's family. I consoled her as well as I could, showing her that, in her position, it was an anomally for her to stay in a little country town, that she ought to have an hotel at Paris, and a mansion in the country. She told me she would not buy any land, for she was going immediately to resume her family estates, and thought of building there. The hotel at Paris was a matter of course, but she wanted another at Bar-sur-Aube, and would pass the summer there, while the mansion she proposed was being built. I took the liberty of opposing the project of buying a house at Bar-sur-Aube, and asserted it was fashionable

to live in a cottage, while building a mansion by its side. But Madame de Lamotte, who had already had some good lessons on this head, persisted in the ordinary weakness of displaying her magnificence in places that had seen her poverty. In spite of me, she bought a house at Bar-sur-Aube, paid twice as much for it as it was worth, and gave it over to architects, who set to work at once to perpetrate all the follies that the site was capable of, and perhaps a little more.

I observed, with much surprise, that Madame de Lamotte had learned the art of keeping within bounds in her dealings with society. She paid to others all that they could expect, and seemed not to be exacting on her own account. She gave alms, and paid her debts regularly. One morning she paid a friendly visit to my father, and brought him back, as I have mentioned, the fifty pounds he had lent her eighteen months before, and when she went away left a gold box on the chimney-piece. My father, I do not know why, took this testimony of gratitude for an insult, and returned the box.

Madame de Lamotte who might have more justly taken offence at its return, did not do so, and pressed me to take back her little present, and to persuade my father to hear reason. As I knew that this, in some cases, was not easy, I would not accept the commission. Despairing of success, she tried to make me accept the unhappy snuff-box for myself; and I had again to refuse, in order not to do anything so unbecoming as to accept a present refused by my father: besides that he would never have forgiven me.

The period of this stay at Bar-sur-Aube passed quietly enough, and towards the end of it people were sorry they could not venture to visit Madame de Lamotte. M. de Latour alone would not be persuaded. Yet I begged him to remark the notable change that the

possession of wealth, however sudden, had produced in the tone, and even in the conduct of M. and Madame de Lamotte. He replied, "I half agree with you, the lady is an adventuress, who has gained some depth, while the husband has lost; he went away a fool, and has returned an idiot, but I shall continue to think ill of them, and, indeed, to speak ill of them, so long as they do not avow by what honest means they have gained, in four months, what they are so foolishly lavishing; and, you yourself,—who are acting the part of Philintas in this comedy,—whom could you convince that the King and Queen, the Comte d'Artois, the Comptroller-general, and all sorts of other grandees have given heaps of gold to people, who were begging even for bread? I know these times are full of extravagance, but not altogether of that kind. Little whispers have come to mine ears, that Madame was in favour with the Queen. I have been keeping a watch over them for a fortnight; and if one word betraying it had been let slip in my presence, I had a nice story ready of the Countess de Gayon and the Queen of Congo, and should have made every one present burst with laughter at their expense. My dear friend, all this is too unreasonable, considering everything, and one should really be ashamed at being so easily taken in. Accept it all if you please; for my part, I will not. I hold to what I know. Now I do know, and from you, that Madame is intimate with the Cardinal de Rohan, since she was carried five or six times at your expense to his Eminence's palace. Probably she went thither afterwards on her own nimble feet. Of all the said lady's acquaintances, the Cardinal de Rohan is the only one to whom prodigality is not impossible. One of two things, therefore, must have happened, either that he has provided them with all that we see, or, that they have stolen it from him. I am willing to give up the second

horn of my dilemma if you will allow me the first; and even then I cannot understand, without great difficulty, how a little village rogue could captivate a prince, a prelate, and a rascal of such consequence."

I certainly felt that there was some truth in the severe conclusions of M. de Latour, and took refuge in the common-places of moderation. "I do not judge as yet, I am willing to wait. Yesterday, I blamed what was bad, why not heartily applaud to-day what I think is good?"

Madame de Lamotte at this time possessed a magnificent set of diamonds, and another of topazes. She had gown pieces of Lyons embroidery, that she seemed to have bought in order to show off, and they were worth the trouble. Her service of plate was complete and in a new style. M. Target was mistaken in placing all this magnificence after the necklace was stolen, and as a consequence of the theft; it existed nine months sooner. No doubt it came from two grants of 2,400*l.* each, given to Madame de Lamotte on the funds of the Grand Almoner's office, and a sum of 1,200*l.* assigned on the Cardinal's private fortune. With this 6,000*l.* she had managed to obtain twice its value in more or less valuable moveable effects, and had not failed to make use of it for that purpose. Then she had treated herself to the frivolous pleasure of coming to display her riches at Bar-sur-Aube; but after having by my advice asked alms in a carriage, and with good success, it was necessary to take a higher line still, and she was obliged to assume the appearance of having riches at her disposal, in order to inspire confidence in the imaginary reputation she was about to claim.

I saw Madame de Lamotte the day before she went away; she seemed well satisfied with the stay she had made at Bar-sur-Aube, and rejoiced as much in the kind reception the inhabitants had given her as if this had not

been imaginary. She seemed to remember, as if by chance, that she owed me some money. I myself had forgotten it, and did not fancy that her memory could contain the remembrance of such a slight matter. She carelessly gave me a rouleau of 1,200 francs. I observed to her that I could not tell her exactly what she owed me, but it was certainly not so much as 50*l*. She said "Take it all the same, if there is too much you can give it to your mother for her poor people."

Having cast up the account, I sent 20*l*. to my mother, and she was delighted, and never ceased to stand up for the innocence of Madame de Lamotte, even after her condemnation. And when the poor creature, after her escape from the Salpétrière, came to hide in the quarries near the town, my mother was bold enough to go and visit her there at night, and faithfully returned to her, in the name of religion, the alms she had given to her for the wretched in the time of her prosperity. She added to the sum, and did yet more by awakening self-respect in the poor branded creature, by bringing her perfect virtue in contact with her.

Madame de Lamotte returned to Paris in the end of November. I did not myself go thither till the middle of next January. I was beginning to become used to a permanent residence in the country, and took more interest in local affairs. People took notice of this, and I was better received on all sides, being considered as a man that it was considered advantageous to live on good terms with. My conduct, while Madame de Lamotte was there, had been appreciated. People did me the justice to see that I had neither been one of the ridiculous admirers of her and her fortune, nor one of the greater number who despised her. All the wise ones agreed with me in saying that we must wait and hope that all this would last.

When I got back to Paris, I was confirmed in my opinion that Madame de Lamotte's wealth was derived from her intimate connection with the Cardinal de Rohan, and I regulated my conduct towards her upon that surmise. I only visited her occasionally. I never went to dine with her without an invitation. I put her at her ease by making a show of treating her with respect.

However, she made occasional reference to her plans before me, with that carelessness which indicates assurance of success. She was going to take her brother out of the navy, an unpleasant and tedious service in time of peace; she had bought a half-pay Captaincy for her husband, in order to give him the title, and was going to see if she could get him made a Colonel on the retired list; as for her sister, she had no notion of her following her own example, and making a foolish marriage. She should be, if she did not object to it, a Canoness at Douxières or Poulangy, since all the places at Remiremont were filled up for ten years to come.

"Had I," she said, "married a man of some name, and about the Court, as I could so easily have done, my advance would have been more speedy; but my husband is more of an obstacle than an assistance to me. In order to gain any real advantage, I must put my name before his, and that is quite contrary to etiquette."

By these and some other remarks, I saw that she had made progress in the Cardinal's society, and began to speak a language which she learned there.

She had sometimes invited me to dinner, and I always went in black, with my hair down, and this mark of respect was pleasing to her. She never failed to introduce me as a young magistrate, and gave me precedence next to persons of title. The tone of the house was, at least in those days, that of good society. There I met the Marquis of Saisseval, a great gamester, rich,

and attached to the Court; the Abbé de Cambres, counsellor in Parliament; Rouillé d'Orfeuil, superintendent of Champagne; Count d'Estaing, a receiver-general; and Lecoulteux de La Noraye, who aspired to the post of director of her affairs and finances.

I recall these particulars, because they correct one of the mistakes the defenders of the Cardinal have fallen into. They have represented Madame de Lamotte as a despicable adventuress, without recollecting that they thereby proclaimed the Cardinal to be a fool; and he certainly was not that. Now this was the real state of things.

Madame de Lamotte, as I have said, had natural abilities, a rare capacity for intrigue, and personal beauty enough to make her liked. As soon as the Cardinal became acquainted with her, he took the sort of interest in her that could not be refused by a man of his rank to one of the last remains of a noble family.

It was after serving her apprenticeship at Versailles, that she began the romance of her life, and managed it with great skill. She quickly disseminated the story of her having mysterious communication with the Queen. This penetrated to the Cardinal, who had been prepared to believe in it by former instances of a similar character; and this portion of her story was supported by such an assumption of discretion and reserve as might impose on any one. At this time, I, and others like myself, were kept at a distance, as were also any persons who found it too burthensome to be respectful to her.

The sentiment with which M. le Cardinal had regarded Madame de Lamotte, from his first interviews with her, was stimulated by these revelations, and the reports which this woman disseminated soon became of so much interest to him, that at last he had no doubt of their

truth. His position at Court must also be borne in mind. In the eyes of Marie Antoinette, he had been guilty of the irreparable guilt of having, during his embassy to Vienna, depicted the Archduchess, then destined to occupy the throne of France, in colours only too faithful.

This act of honesty had been the misfortune of his life. The King, as was often the case, put up with him, although he had little esteem for him, or for other prelates whose morals were doubtful. So the Cardinal de Rohan was the man of all unlucky courtiers, whom his position rendered most unfortunate. He never ceased to suffer from it, but he expected to become reconciled to his Queen through the good offices of Madame de Lamotte, and to gain whatever a man could want, who was already nothing more than a Prince of the house of Rohan, Cardinal, Grand Almoner of France, Commander of the Order of the Saint Esprit, Bishop of Strasburg, Sovereign Prince of Hildesheim, Abbot of Noirmoutiers and Saint Vaast, Provost of the Sorbonne, &c., Member of the Academies, and the darling of all the great ladies of Paris; besides being owner of revenues of the church, to the amount of some thirty or thirty-five thousands a year, and as was natural, deeply in debt.

Just at the time when his relations with Madame de Lamotte became more intimate, he was in a state of embarrassment, between a most ardent ambition and a very tender affection. Each of these feelings reacted so as to increase the other, and the unlucky man was almost out of his senses. By an opportunity that I will relate, I was able to glance over some letters he wrote at that time to Madame de Lamotte; they were all fire; the contest, or rather the surge, of the two passions was terrific. It is fortunate for the prince's memory, that these letters have been burnt, but it is a loss to the history of the

human heart. They would have brought to light another recess in that abyss. At the time I speak of, the Cardinal had gone no further than granting unlimited amounts of subsidies to Madame de Lamotte from the Grand Almoner's chest, and some large sums from his private means. She might have extracted much more, the time for refusal being far enough off; but the splendid swindle of the necklace was soon to be attempted, and the approaches were so prepared as to assure success, notwithstanding the most gross improbabilities. The cardinal was ready to believe anything, being incapable of sound judgment. Such is a portion of the knowledge requisite, in order to approach towards the truth of this extraordinary business. It often, however, seems as if writers thought themselves bound to represent Madame de Lamotte as nothing more than a vulgar adventuress who plans a robbery one day, and executes it the next. Besides, the business of the necklace has become an enigma to which every one seeks to find a clue, according to the bent of his own passions, and on which he makes comments, whether true or false; and innocence, though seated on a throne, has been made the butt of the most rashly absurd judgments.

As before mentioned, I had left Madame de Lamotte in the midst of her ambitious intrigues, and resumed my studies at Paris, with my former friendships. I was not so much engaged in business as if I had followed the legal profession in order to make a fortune; but I was always retained for suits in which I had been previously employed. I was fortunate enough to argue two causes at the afternoon sitting, and with some success. I prepared also some written pleadings, attended discussions in the library, and followed a course of lectures on Canon Law, delivered by a certain Abbé Berthier. I then first had the advantage of making the acquaintance of M. d'Ambray, at that time Solicitor-General

to the Court of Exchequer, the prince of rising orators, and the richest hope of the legal profession in France.

M. d'Ambray found nothing to employ him at the Exchequer, except matters naturally dry; but to a just and penetrating mind he added a power of oratory most brilliant, and at the same time most easy; and infused such a charm into everything that he touched, that we used to hasten from attendance in the higher court, where causes of the greatest importance were being argued by the most fluent advocates, in order to crowd the Court of Exchequer, whenever we expected to hear the youngest Solicitor-General of the time. M. d'Ambray was a magistrate even in the bosom of his family. His strict morality, his respect for, and his practice of, its duties, was overlaid by a kindly gaiety, and he was regarded as an example as much for his virtues as for his talents. The great inheritance of the glory of d'Aguesseau was predicted for him.

He had two comrades at the Exchequer, who had been created expressly to serve as foils to this splendid example of the rising sun. One was M. Clément de Barville, an extreme Jansenist, and no less common-place than all the race of Clément. The other was a M. Darfort de Rochfort, who at last got made superintendent of Brittany through the interposition of the first president de Barintin when he became keeper of the seals. He still lives somewhere in a post given to him by M. d'Ambray in his turn; a most singular specimen of the old order of things. His relations declare that he has lost none of his ability: they should be believed, and even still he may be cited as an example of the omissions of nature in her distribution of human intellect. The floor of the Parliament was then occupied by MM. Seguier, d'Aguesseau, and Joly de Fleury, three illustrious names! I did not share in the admiration then felt in the profession for

M. Seguier. His exterior was unfortunate for an orator. He was short in stature and unpleasantly fat, and had a nasal tone of voice, and a way of poising himself carelessly on his legs when he spoke, but I admit that these defects were concealed by some inexplicable dash of genius of which his language and gestures both partook. He was praised for his knowledge and strength of judgment; others went further and claimed him as the most recent model of a good style of oratory, and quoted his three speeches at the Beds of Justice, in 1771. These speeches produced a prodigious effect at that time, and justly so; but in reading them again at the present time, they seem to be more in the character of a courageous magistrate than of a good orator; perhaps he is a Cato—certainly not a Cicero.

M. Seguier had returned to the hall surrounded with the halo he had made his own in the days of danger. The reputation gained by his conduct was so great that it was extended rather too freely to his talents. Men discovered a wise development of old principles, opposed to the turbulence of new opinions, in the various presentments against the ever-renewed productions of philosophy contained in his principal pleadings, and especially in his refutation of the memorial of Dupatty in the affair of the rogues of Chaumont. He was a laborious champion of the good old cause, but not a brilliant one. His blows are very seldom startling, and never carry one away. Like M. d'Ambray at the Exchequer, M. Seguier had two poor colleagues at his side in the session; the first, M. d'Aguesseau, grandson to the Chancellor, a handsome young man, very insipid, very well curled, who delivered in schoolboy fashion, the pleadings that the advocate Blondel prepared for him indifferently well. This was so well known in the hall that if the solicitor-general had made use of any ridiculous arguments Blondel was

blamed for them. He defended himself as best he could, but without venturing to say that M. d'Aguesseau had any share in the matter, as that would have been a mere joke. I was present at the commencement of a session at a very remarkable suit for abduction, between the English family of Hamilton as plaintiffs, and a M. Beresford as defendant. The circumstances detailed composed a most interesting romance, and the affair was the more complicated by the circumstance that the plaintiff and the defendant were both foreigners. M. d'Aguesseau had to speak in it, and we used to say that the retainer had been given two generations too late for the name he bore. Anyhow Blondel did his best, obtained assistance, and the pleading was considered fair enough. The exordium particularly struck us by its chaste style and thoughts, beyond the range of those in common circulation in the hall. The solicitor-general, for instance, appealed to Richardson, whose mind could not have created a more astonishing fiction than the real event that had to be tried before session. The young advocates had but one opinion about the exordium.

When the court rose, Blondel was placed in the witness-box, and allowed that the preface came from Laharpe, who in his turn corrected the memorials of Legouvé and Elie de Beaumont, and composed academical discourses for advocates who could not do it for themselves. The other colleague of M. Seguier was that M. Joly de Fleury whom we afterwards saw in the post of attorney-general. He brought into the Palais de Justice the most perfect, and at the same time most objectionable mediocrity ever seen, and thus to him, much better than to his uncle, would have applied the explanation that Voltaire gave of the names Omer Joly de Fleury, which the latter also bore. He is not *Homer* to read, not *jolly* to look at, nor *flowery* in speech. At the

present day it is hard to understand how such a man could get into one of the most important offices of state, that of attorney-general to the Parliament of Paris. The state of things at that time must be remembered. The family of Joly had been long known in the profession; a member of it had held the office of attorney-general at the same time as d'Aguesseau, and was very nearly his equal. From that time the family had had a firm footing before the council, and on the higher benches of parliament. Its members had contracted honourable alliances, and when they all united their influence to get a place in the same career transferred from father to son, or from uncle to nephew, the minister was not powerful enough to resist them, even in the interest of the state or the King. The first families of the Parliament of Paris made a sort of oligarchy, that was often very embarrassing to the minister, because he could neither grant them a favour nor inflict a penalty on them.

I steadfastly pursued the course at the Lyceum. I had been one of its founders, and was obliged, together with some of my friends, at certain times, to labour at a periodical work in which the subject which had occupied each course was reproduced, leaving as much as possible to each professor his own style and manner. This work proved unsuccessful, because each professor wanted to keep his lecture untouched, that he might avail himself of it at a future time, as they really did. And I remember a rather exciting scene we had with Laharpe, when we wished to suppress some bitter language about religion which he would introduce without reason and without excuse into his excellent literary lectures. It was not because we were in the least opposed to the philosophy of the 18th century, very far from it; but we passed half our lives in the Palais, where the old doctrines were daily preached, and where we were brought into contact

with magistrates, some of whom were sincerely religious, and others at least made such a profession before us. Thus our manners insensibly acquired a grave tone, and an appearance at least of external respect for anything worthy of general deference. The Academy, or rather the philosophers' party, acted in a very different manner. To attack *l'infâme* was quite the order of the day; irreligious maxims were to be found everywhere,—in works of natural history, of geometry, and of medicine, in travels, in university lectures, and almost in sermons. Laharpe was the leader of this party; the patriarch of Ferney had selected him as his favourite disciple, and he justified his selection by an excess of vigour, gall, and insolence. He so deeply repented of his faults that they may be recalled without shaking the reputation of sanctity that illuminated his decline.

What a strange spectacle did France then present! As long as the American war lasted, the issue of that contest had kept the minds of men in suspense, and every sentiment was merged in real patriotism. Peace was concluded, and not ingloriously. The object for which war had been undertaken was accomplished at last. We had gained in it some unimportant colonies; and, what was of much more consequence, we had ascertained that, by enlisting Spain under our banner, we could make head against England. The disgrace of the treaty of Paris was effaced; the present seemed certain, and the future only presented itself under smiling colours. Our ports and markets were abundantly supplied. The wealth of Europe flowed into Paris, and it seemed as if the gifts of heaven crowned, as a natural consequence, the success of our policy; the harvests of all kinds, of the years 1784 and 1785, were admirable.

Liberty had made its appearance in France without any invitation. It was known that *lettres de cachet*,

formerly, so much dreaded, were no longer permitted except to assist certain unfortunate families. Men wrote, spoke, and argued about all sorts of things. The clergy, always assisted the government, never placed themselves in opposition to it, and took the lead in the practice of toleration. Parliaments lagged a little behind, like fathers who said to their children, "Use, but do not abuse." The Court erred in being too frivolous, but that defect applied only to our recollections of it, for in its present aspect it appeared more attractive in the eyes of both town and country. An air of contentment animated our places of meeting, our assemblies, and family circles with new charms; an odour of public felicity seemed to be disseminated throughout the beautiful country of France. But we soon became tired of this happiness; novelty was requisite at any price, and minds seemed to be seized with universal giddiness; the people ran to that mesmeric goblet around which so many who were in good health learned to consider themselves sick, and the dying were confident in the faith that they were cured. Marat, who was then only a professor of physics, made a crusade against the sun, declaring that it was not the fountain of light; and found persons senseless enough to listen to, and even to commend him. The court and city abandoned the master-pieces of the French stage, and unworthily bestowed their applause in unworthy booths already too base for the populace. Charlatans of all kinds found followers. At Strasburg was a Cagliostro, born in the mines of Memphis, brought up in the bosom of the Pyramids; he had the gift of miracles, he cured the sick, he sowed gold and benefits on the bosom of poverty and misfortune, and no one could discover whence he obtained this gold or this power. He displayed valuable diamonds, and attached no value to them. Possessor of the grand succedaneum, he hesitates in his choice of the mortal

with whom he would share this immense secret! And there was a prince of the church, a Cardinal de Rohan, at the feet of the knave begging to be selected! At Paris there was a fellow named Bliton, who clearly perceived springs of water a hundred feet underground, and even like a new Moses, made them spring forth at the will of his magic hazel wand. In society, men of weight, and persons about the Court, were heard stating that they had been eye-witnesses of all these miracles.

The Comptroller-General committed the error, or rather introduced the novelty, of making the bonds of the loan of 1783 negotiable by a simple transfer, and with this impulsion stock-jobbing made unheard-of progress. Then these loan-bonds appeared in the public market, backed by securities of the Indian Company, by the shares of the Water Companies of Paris, with shares of discount banks, stock of a Geneva loan, foreign paper, &c., &c. Stock-jobbing found at its birth adepts who could have shown a trick to those of the present day, and even the government was reduced to tremble before this modern Moloch.

At the same time Montgolfier produced the curious and useless invention of balloons, and all heads were up in the air; there was no doubt what would be their next direction. In the meantime there was a rivalry among men for the honour of breaking their necks; and the example of some maniacs who succeeded in doing so was not enough to deter others. Yet the youth of the Court were tired of being merely Frenchmen; they flocked to the field-days at Potsdam for the chance of kissing the boot of Frederic the Great during his lifetime. They were transformed by the touch of that relic, and returned to Paris Prussians from head to foot. They dreamed of nothing but file-marching, blows of the cane, long pigtails, and light infantry, as in the system of the great Frederic, and in all good faith undertook to make

French soldiers submit to a system appropriately forced on German automatons.

So we became extravagant from satiety of enjoyment. Minds were soon to be so goaded and wrenched in such contrary directions that the old social ties would not be sufficient to restrain them, but such bonds would be violently burst asunder, and the revolution would set in.

As soon as I heard of the arrival of Cagliostro at Paris, and that he had gone to the Cardinal's palace, I had no doubt that some connexion would soon be established between him and Madame de Lamotte, and I hoped she would procure me the pleasure of supping with so curious a personage. She made a great fuss about it. The Count de Cagliostro had given out that he would not be the guest of any one, or he would have been besieged with invitations from the Court and the city; he had already given absolute refusals on this point to the Count d'Artois and the Duke de Chartres, and had declared that he would not go to anyone. At the Cardinal's palace, he would not even have his meals with his Eminence, but had them sent up to his own rooms.

I returned to the charge without more success. Sometime after Madame de Latour, driven to extremity by some of her husband's malicious witticisms, had separated from him, and come to take up her abode at Paris with Madame de Lamotte, accompanied by her daughter, a young beauty of fifteen, remarkably fair and slender, the very person who was soon written down in Cagliostro's conjuring book to act the part of little innocence. I learned from these ladies that Madame de Lamotte and Cagliostro were hand-and-glove, and that he used to come to supper with her. So I complained to them bitterly of Madame de Lamotte's refusal to bring me into his company, and added some more complaints of some unfriendly proceedings of

that lady, saying that I had resolved not to expose myself any more to her refusals and insults. This threat did not fail to succeed. A few days later I received a note from Madame de Lamotte in which she accused me of injustice, and yet invited me to supper two days afterwards, telling me I had better arrive before ten o'clock. I was there at the time fixed. Madame de Lamotte wanted to warn me that she must disarm the suspicion of the Count de Cagliostro, as he would not stay to supper on any account if he suspected that any one had been invited to meet him. Besides she begged me not to ask him any questions, not to interrupt him, and readily to answer any questions he might address to me. I assented to these conditions, and would have borne much harder ones in order to satisfy my curiosity. At half-past ten Count Cagliostro was announced, and both leaves of the door were flung open. Madame de Lamotte hastily quitted her chair, sprang to meet him, and conducted him to a corner of the room, where she seemed to demand forgiveness for my presence. Cagliostro advanced and bowed without appearing in the least embarrassed at seeing a stranger.

Cagliostro seemed moulded for the express purpose of playing Signor Tulipano at the Italian Theatre; he was of a medium height, rather stout, with an olive complexion, a very short neck, round face, two large eyes on a level with the cheeks, and a broad turned-up nose. I never saw any one so like him as André of the Constitutional Assembly, who died not long ago director of the forests on the Civil List, with this difference, that André had designedly degraded himself to the appearance and manners of a clown, while Cagliostro, also by design, had prepared his whole exterior to appear as a charlatan. His hair was dressed in a way new to France, being divided into several small tresses that united behind the

head, and were twisted up into what was then called a club.

He wore on that day an iron-grey coat of French make, with gold lace, a scarlet waistcoat trimmed with broad Spanish lace, red breeches, his sword looped to the skirt of his coat, and a laced hat with a white feather, the latter a decoration still required of mountebanks, tooth-drawers, and other medical practitioners who proclaimed and retailed their drugs in the open air. Cagliostro set off this costume by lace ruffles, several valuable rings, and shoe-buckles, which were, it is true, of antique design, but bright enough to be taken for real diamonds. There was no one at supper but the members of the family, among whom I include a certain Father Loth, a Minim friar from the Palais Royal, who managed in some way to make his frock agree with the post of sub-secretary to Madame de Lamotte. He said mass to her on Sunday, and for the rest of the week performed such commissions at the Cardinal's palace as the first secretary, Villette, considered beneath his dignity. Nor was a certain Chevalier de Montbruel considered as a stranger. He was a veteran of the green-room, but still a good speaker, always ready to affirm anything, who always chanced to be wherever Cagliostro was, bore witness to the miracles he had worked, and offered himself as an example cured of—I do not know how many maladies, with names enough to frighten one. So we were nine or ten at table. Madame de Lamotte was between Cagliostro and Montbruel, and I was beside Madame Latour, opposite to the former. I could only look at him furtively, and did not yet know what to think. The face, the attire, and the whole man made an impression on me that I could not prevent. I listened to the talk. He spoke some sort of medley, half French half Italian, and made many quotations which might be Arabic, but which he did not

trouble himself to translate. He alone spoke, and had time to run over twenty subjects, for he only allowed them to be discussed as far as he liked. He never failed continually to ask if he were understood, and the company bowed all round to assure him that he was. When he began on any subject he seemed carried away by it, and spoke impressively with voice and gesture; but all at once came down from it to pay very tender compliments and odd civilities to the mistress of the house; the same performance continuing throughout the supper. I could not remember any more of it than that the hero had spoken of heaven, of the stars, of the Great Secret, of Memphis, of the high-priest, of transcendental chemistry, of giants and monstrous beasts, of a city ten times as large as Paris, in the middle of Africa, where he had correspondents; how ignorant we were of all these charming things that he had at his fingers' ends; and that he had mingled in his discourse curious inane compliments to Madame de Lamotte, whom he called his hind, his gazelle, his swan, his dove, borrowing his appellations from the most amiable of the animal kingdom. After supper he did me the honour to address to me a number of questions in succession. I answered them all by the most respectful avowals of my ignorance, and afterwards learnt from Madame de Lamotte that he had conceived a most favourable idea of my appearance and learning.

I was determined to return home alone and on foot. It was one of those nights in spring when the moon seems to put itself in harmony with the first moments of awakening nature by a still softer light than usual. The city was as lonely and silent as it is in fen-land after midnight. I stopped at the Place Royale, for I could not but meditate on the spectacle lately before my eyes. I pitied poor humanity, as I reflected that the powerful of the

earth broke out into the most extravagant absurdities in consequence of the satiety which social order had imposed on them from the cradle. I thought of the unfortunate Cardinal de Rohan between Cagliostro and Madame de Lamotte, who I clearly saw were already in league to drag him to ruin. And was my own curiosity really innocent? What was I about in this gilded cavern, inhabited by beings whom I despised, and ought to have abhorred? I recalled my earlier years, passed so quietly under my father's roof, those spent at college in the study of learning and virtue, and again the time when I was seduced into such errors as might leave regrets, but not remorse. I blamed myself for being weak, and resolved, quietly but effectually, to separate myself from Madame de Lamotte and her crew.

Cagliostro, before whom I had not opened my lips, had considered me a very learned man. The ladies had confirmed an opinion so favourable to me, and the next week I received a pressing invitation to supper from Madame de Lamotte. I could not doubt that this was for a second meeting with Cagliostro. I had had enough of the first and refused, giving a polite excuse. Madame Latour, whom I met at the house of Madame de Crozat, accused me of being very odd. "You were all on fire," she said to me, "to know the Count de Cagliostro; a week later you will not come and meet him at supper." "That," said I, "is easily explained. If the Count de Cagliostro is in my eyes no more than a man of peculiar species, curious to see for once, but very wearisome the second time, why should I be bored with him? Allow me to reserve your sister's kindness for a better occasion." "But indeed I cannot conceive how you think so ill of the Count de Cagliostro; he is an extraordinary man; you do not know what he can do." "No, but I suspect a little, and do not wish

to see." "Sir, you are getting as bad as M. de Latour." "Madame, I do not know if your husband be pleasant or otherwise with ladies, but I ought not to hear it from you." The lady left me in anger, and I was well satisfied that I had already come to a rupture with her.

I do not know the foundation of the credulity of Madame de Latour, nor of her hopes and dreams. One of the tricks of Cagliostro was to make known at Paris an event occurring at the moment at Vienna, at London, or Pekin; or that would take place in six days, six months, six years, or twenty years from the moment. But this required an apparatus which consisted of a glass globe full of clear water, and placed on a table. The table was covered with a cloth, the ground of which was black, and cabalistic signs of the highest Rosicrucian order were embroidered on it in red. On the table, and around the globe, were placed different emblems at distances carefully arranged. Among them were little Egyptian figures, antique phials of lustral water, and even a crucifix, but different from that which Christians adore. The apparatus being all ready, a clairvoyante was to kneel before the glass globe—that is to say, a young person was to observe the scenes of which the globe should offer a representation, and to relate them; but a clairvoyante was hard to find, for more than one condition was required. The young person must be of a purity unequalled, except by the angels; she was to be born under a given constellation, have delicate nerves, great susceptibility, and blue eyes. By unspeakable good luck, Mademoiselle de Latour, niece of Madame de Lamotte, having been examined by Cagliostro, was stated to fulfil all the conditions of a clairvoyante, and was declared to be one. The mother nearly died of joy, and thought that the treasures of

Memphis, and of the great city in the interior of Africa, were going to fall to her family, who were prodigiously in want of them!

The invocation commenced with the young innocent or clairvoyante kneeling, with eyes fixed on the globe filled with water. He who presided at this awful mystery must be an affiliated member of an order of men who have preserved the Great Secret from the time of the origin of all things. It had been only partially revealed here and there to the magi, to the Egyptian priesthood, to the high-priests, to magicians, to Templars, to the Rosicrucians. The practitioner summoned the genii by a concurrence of emblems and cabalistic words, requiring them to enter into the globe, and there to represent unknown past events, or future, that were to be revealed. It seems that this game is not at all amusing to the spirits, and among them are some obstinate individuals who do not care to insert themselves into a glass globe full of water, and place themselves under a magician's orders, and even some are so violent as to contend with him vigorously. Sometimes the performer has to use the most violent exertion for whole hours together in endeavouring to overcome the resistance of the spirits, and even then never obtains his object. In this case he declares that he has exhausted his learning and power, and the affair is put off to another day. If on the other hand the spirits are conquered, they crowd into the glass globe, the water in it is agitated and clouded, the clairvoyante falls into convulsions, cries out that she sees and is going to see, and begs loudly for help. The exorciser holds her up before the globe, and orders her in the Name of the Great Being to declare what she sees. It seems that in her turn she has more or less suffering; but the orders are repeated always in the same Name; they become more and more pressing, and proceed to menaces.

The poor clairvoyante falls to the ground and rolls; she is raised up and supported before the globe; trembling and agitated, she declares that there appear before her eyes, still in a state of confusion and uncertainty, the persons and things that compose the scene on which information is desired. The performer does not let her off so easily; she is obliged to recognise the persons, to make sure of their dress and their actions, and to repeat the words they make use of. This is only obtained by the exercise of great patience, through contortions, grinding of teeth, and such severe convulsions that at the end of the ceremony the clairvoyante is carried to bed half-dead.

It would be hard to believe that such scenes took place in France at the end of the eighteenth century; yet they attracted persons of consequence in the court and in the city. The Count d'Estaing had been led away by these follies, and became their champion. The Cardinal de Rohan was in a state of admiration of the advantage that the new divination would procure to him over his enemies, and it was reported that the Duke de Chartres,* at whose court it had been decided no longer to believe in a God, was quite inclined to believe in Cagliostro, so true is it that there always is a fountain of credulity in human weakness, and if it be not exhausted by the mysteries of religion, it bursts forth at hap-hazard in ridiculous or dangerous forms. M. de Malesherbes told me that Voltaire went home out of humour when he heard a raven croak on his left, and Bonaparte was a fatalist!

As I said, I left Madame de Lamotte to her intrigues, to her greatness, and her miracles, and divided my time between study and society which was very good company in itself, and especially for me. Twice a

* Afterwards Duke of Orléans, and 'Égalité.'

month at the outside I went to see Madame de Lamotte; if she were out I wrote my name in her visiting-book, and it reckoned as a call; if I met her the terms were well understood. She told me no more of her fortune, of her connections, or her business at Paris; and thus our intimacy was nothing more than in accordance with frigid politeness.

I went to the last supper I had with her quite by chance; one of my comrades had spoken of the arquebusiers of Paris in my presence, and had added that a president of the legal profession, M. Pinon, was colonel. I knew that the arquebusiers of Bar-sur-Aube were the first in rank of the military institutions of that city, but I did not think that anything so ridiculous would be known at Paris. I was curious to see if it were true; my comrade offered me the means of so doing, and proposed to take me to an arquebus banquet that was to be held exactly three days later. I accepted his offer, and we went thither.

We amused ourselves for some time at the ridiculous appearance of the little shopkeepers of Paris, clothed in very rich uniforms, and at the mixed character of the feast presided over by M. Pinon the younger.

My comrade was expected at an evening party, and I sent him in my carriage, while I stayed some time longer at the ball, as there were some pretty women there. I walked away about ten o'clock, and kept along the boulevard, intending to hire a carriage at the stand in the Rue St. Louis. When I came to opposite the Rue Saint Gilles, where Madame Lamotte lived, I instinctively went down it, and found myself at the door of her house. I remembered where I was, and asked if anyone were at home. I was told the owners were all out, and that I should only find Mademoiselle Colson. It only made me the more disposed to stop. This Colson girl was a relation of M. de Lamotte, on whom his lady had

conferred a degree, and made her a companion. She was tolerably sensible and witty, and when I met her we used to hold up our hands in astonishment at the extravagance and follies of the heads of the family. They told her nothing, but she made it all out. She said to me that day, "I think their highnesses have some great scheme on hand. They spend their lives in secret councils, to which the first secretary alone is admitted. His reverence the sub-secretary is reduced to listening at the doors, and he makes three journeys a day to the old Rue du Temple, without being able to make out a word that will betray the meaning of the message he carries. The friar is in despair, for he is as curious as a devout old woman."

Thus we passed two hours in speaking ill of our neighbour, in guessing, and making prophecies. When I wanted to take leave, Mademoiselle Colson showed me the clock. It was midnight, I should find no carriage on the stand. Since it was so late, there was nothing for me to do but wait for the return of Madame de Lamotte, and for her to send me home; I consented to do so. At last, between twelve and one o'clock, we heard the sound of a carriage, out of which there got Monsieur and Madame de Lamotte, Villette, and a woman of from twenty-five to thirty years of age, fair, very handsome, and very well made. The two ladies were elegantly but simply dressed; the two men, in morning coats, so that they looked as if they had returned from a party of pleasure in the country. Of course they began by joking on my *tête-à-tête* with Mademoiselle Colson, and on our vexation at such an untimely interruption. There were discussions and laughter; we sat down. The unknown lady shared in the general liveliness, but in moderation, and with timidity. We sat down to table, the mirth went on, and became noisy; Mademoiselle Colson and I

preserved such an appearance of wonder and gravity as always distinguishes persons thrown among very mirthful people, without being able to share their amusement, or knowing its occasion. However, our presence was a constraint to the party in their overflow of mirth, for they could not freely speak of the subject of their pleasure, and enjoy all the circumstances. M. de Lamotte consulted Villette whether there were any danger in speaking out. Villette answered that "he did not consider the saying true, that one is only betrayed by one's friends, as one is so by all the world, and that really discretion—" He had got so far, when Madame de Lamotte, at whose side he sat at table, sharply put her hand on his mouth, telling him in a most imperative tone, "Be quiet, M. Beugnot is too honest a man for us to confide in him." I give the words, without the alteration of a syllable. It would have been a flattering compliment, had not Madame de Lamotte, in her ordinary conversation, used the words *stupid* and *honest* as synonymous.

Madame de Lamotte, as she generally did with me, turned the conversation on Bar-sur-Aube, on my family, and when I expected to get back there. Everybody wished the supper to come to an end. I asked Madame de Lamotte to let her horses take me home. She only made a trifling objection; she had to send home the unknown guest at table, and settled that whichever lived the farthest off should first drop the other. I objected, and asked the handsome lady to allow me to see her home wherever she might live, and said I was afraid that in any case it would prove too near. I had, from the first moment that I set eyes on her, been disquieted by the face of this woman, with the sort of feeling that one has towards a face that one is certain of having seen somewhere, without being able to remember where and when. And I hoped to find this out while

seeing her home. I put several questions to her, in hopes that she would put me on the track, but could get nothing out of her; whether it were that in a private conference before we started, Madame de Lamotte had recommended her to say nothing, or, as I am more inclined to think, that she was disposed naturally to prefer mute scenes to conversation. I set down the silent beauty in the Rue de Clery. The uneasiness I had experienced at her face was really caused by no less than her perfect likeness to the Queen; for the lady was no other than Mademoiselle d'Oliva, and the delight of the party was occasioned by the perfect success of the plot just played off in the groves of Versailles, where the Cardinal de Rohan, deceived by her likeness, received a rose and a little speech from Mademoiselle d'Oliva, thinking in his madness that they came from the Queen herself! I was then devoid of any key to the mystery; but soon found it, when the matter became public; and could then have no doubt who were the real culprits.

CHAPTER III.

Castle of Brienne—Clairvaux—Conversation with the Count de Dampierre—Jour de la St. Bernard—The Abbé Maury—The Diamond Necklace—My Advice to Madame de Lamotte—Letters of the Cardinal de Rohan—Arrest of Madame de Lamotte—Conduct of the Baron de Breteuil—Mlle. d'Oliva—M. de Crosne—My Refusal to defend Madame de Lamotte—M. Doitot—Cagliostro and Serafina Feliciani—The Opposition Party.

I RESOLVED to return into Champagne though it was no later than the month of July. My sister was going into Provence with her husband, and I wished to see her before she went. I was afraid my parents would suffer from the unaccustomed loneliness, and thought it a duty to give up some months of my stay in Paris. I went to bid adieu to Madame de Lamotte, and she scolded me sharply for my sudden departure, saying that she did not intend to leave Paris till about the beginning of October.

I was much surprised to see her arrive in the first days of August with her whole household, husband and all. Villette alone stayed at Paris like a hidden sentinel; and what seemed the more strange was the daily arrival of waggon-loads of furniture, much more than the house could hold, and splendid furniture too. Two complete services of plate and china of the greatest beauty wound up this luxurious outfit. To complete their rashness, they displayed a case of diamonds worth eight thousand pounds. The husband, possessed more than was likely to belong to an honest man, and every carriage they had was built in England with a care and attention to detail that showed that expense was the last thing considered.

Among the furniture might be noticed some of those costly fancies that the arts invent to tempt the most prodigious wealth—two artificial canary birds that sung an air in two parts; golden musical boxes (now become more common, but still rare at that time); mechanical clocks that exhibited different spectacles every hour they struck. And on seeing these things one could not but feel that they could only have been purchased by people weary of their money, and ready to throw it away. All along it might be thought possible for the Cardinal de Rohan to be at the bottom of this magnificent waste, and to admire the good use to which his Eminence put the funds of the Grand Almoner. Men were surprised the first time the house had displayed its magnificence; this time they were anxious and almost indignant. The husband and wife gave no sign of uneasiness, their table was excellent, and they gave parties in rapid succession. They tried to attract the whole town, and to distribute their favours beyond it; but their success was not very great in either direction. I saw a melancholy instance of this.

Brienne was at that time one of the most frequented country mansions in France. Persons of consequence, and distinguished literary men, from Paris visited it; and the county nobility were constantly there. Plays were much acted there, as well as everywhere else. M. de Lamotte told me one day that he was asked thither by M. de Brienne, and offered me a seat in his carriage if I would like to see the sight. I accepted. We went in a very splendid carriage with four horses, and three servants behind. Just before starting I should have liked to cry off, for I felt that I should share in the absurdity of this ostentation; and, indeed, our arrival disgusted every one. Happily for us the preparation for the play occupied every one's attention, particularly that of the owners of the house. After entering the saloon in order

to show ourselves, we went into the theatre. I was beside M. de Lamotte, and soon saw that he was the object of malicious glances, and of opera-glasses passed from hand to hand with sarcastic smiles and shrugs. He deserved it, being most elaborately dressed, and in the worst taste had managed to introduce several diamonds at a period of great simplicity. Indeed, he wore a dress-coat of sky-blue, a white waistcoat with embroidery, and canary-coloured taffety breeches. Dress-coats were worn then as now, crossing in front, but with larger facings. Madame de Lamotte had taken a fancy to have a beautiful nosegay of lilies and roses embroidered on the left lappet of her husband's coat. Such an ornament had never been used by any one before, and never was again! Everybody was wondering what it meant, and conjectured that it was a sort of parody on the impaled arms of husband and wife, the one being roses and the other fleurs-de-lis. Stupidity and folly could go no further.

After the play the company returned to the saloon; there were among them the neighbouring nobility, and men of letters from Paris; the Abbé de Morellet, De Laharpe, and Masson de Morvilliers. I bowed to Madame de Brienne, who hardly nodded to me, and turned her back; my welcome by the master of the house was confined to a "good evening, sir," in a very dry tone. It is impossible to be at ease in a large company when ill-received by the master of the house. I remained standing, not knowing whither to direct my steps in the enemy's camp; when my good stars brought the Count de Dampierre into the room, and he took possession of my person when I did not know what to do with myself. It was a piece of luck for him to have me to talk to of all the innovations that were already working in his head; and even much greater luck for me to have

him to listen to. That he might not waste the time of supper, he dragged me to the table, and seated me next him, presenting an example of a person who could talk eagerly and eat plentifully both at once. I was a little distracted by trying to see what had become of my travelling companion. M. Dampierre continually brought me back to the subject in hand. He said: "Take no notice, there's a poor fop down there, and they have been laughing at him for these two hours; do you know him?" "Yes, a little." "Well, who is he? Is he one of our sort? Does he know where we are?" "Not in the least." "Well, let them serve him as they like." Then M. Dampierre resumed his discourse with the same eagerness.

Supper came to an end long before my lecturer, and on leaving the table I listened to him with additional pleasure, for my position as his auditor was just such as to prevent my being put out of countenance. I only knew what happened through the stories of some guests who came to tell us the tricks that they had played M. de Lamotte during supper. He had been carefully prevented from getting anything to eat, in spite of the splendid repast before his eyes, and quitted the table as unpleasantly hungry as Sancho Panza at the end of the first banquet served up to him in his government. This was effected by a set of tricks, and the inventors were delighted by their success. Every newcomer wanted to tell us what he had to do with it. The Count de Dampierre broke out against interruptions. "Good, very good; but let us alone, we have no canary-coloured breeches, nor flowers embroidered at our button-hole; there is your man crouching in the chimney-corner; go and laugh at him, if he chooses to bear it, and leave us to talk sense." M. de Lamotte took courage. He came to me, and asked me to go. I was very glad to do so; but there

was something more at the bottom of the cup. When I went to make my bow to M. de Brienne, and asked him almost trembling if he had any commands to Bar-sur-Aube, he made me a sign to come to him, and as I left the hands of M. de Dampierre, who could never leave off, I fell into the hands of M. de Brienne, who was not much better. He had not sat down to table, and had taken no share in the practical jokes from which M. de Lamotte had suffered. Indeed, he had angrily refused to hear any stories about them; but he had not been a bit better pleased at my coming to his house in such company. I made my excuses as best I could, saying that M. de Lamotte had told me that he had been invited to Brienne for that very day. M. de Brienne showed me that whether M. de Lamotte were invited or not, I had been very wrong to come with him. I quite agreed, and asked his pardon, because it was the quickest way of concluding the matter. But the conversation at once took another turn. Hardly anything went on in the county that M. de Brienne did not take an interest in, and always a most honourable view of it. I was consulted on many points, so there were several subjects we had to speak of, and he was lengthy. Poor M. de Lamotte stood at a distance, watching our motions, and longing for the moment when I should be released; and all the while people were passing backwards and forwards, with marks of scorn or pity. I did not dare to mention his name, nor to point out that he had been waiting an hour for me. I ventured on a first salutation, as if to take leave. M. de Brienne took no notice, and went on talking. A few minutes later he began again, and asked me to sleep at Brienne. All this time my travelling companion was on live coals. At last I plucked up a morsel of courage, and took my leave. I went out with M. de Lamotte, and we got into

his magnificent carriage, with two servants holding torches behind, and, besides them, a negro covered with silver from head to foot. The windows of the saloon at Brienne look out on the north terrace, forming the principal entrance of the mansion. Madame de Brienne and all the company were at the windows to behold the majesty of our departure, and to do homage to it by clapping their hands, with laughs and jokes that we could very plainly hear; and which only made the carriage go the faster. I behaved as if I had heard nothing of what had taken place, M. de Lamotte as if he had nothing to complain of. We both took refuge in talking of the play we had witnessed; how the comedy was acted, and fell, to the best of our ability, on Madame de Brienne, who, at her age and with her figure, was bold enough to undertake the parts of the prettiest and archest soubrettes. When we got back, M. de Lamotte had the modesty not to say anything about his reception, I did as much from good feeling. The adventure soon got wind, and was embellished by the tales of those who had performed in it, and for a fortnight divided the interest of the houses of the neighbourhood with the riddle about Mercury. Madame de Brienne never ceased talking of it, and rejoicing over it, though I sometimes took the liberty of telling her that it was one of those moments of her life when she had failed in kindness.

Some days later, Madame de Lamotte proposed to me to go with her on a visit to the Duke de Penthièvre, who was then at Château Vilain. The wound inflicted at Brienne was still open, and I had taken all sorts of oaths that I would not be caught again, so I refused. She insisted; I pointed out to her that, having no claim to be received by one of the royal family, nor any request to make from him, I would not submit to dining with his gentlemen-in-waiting, nor be present at his taking coffee. I must

add, to make what I have mentioned intelligible, that etiquette was more scrupulously observed in the household of the Duke de Penthièvre than in that of any other prince of the blood. His Christian humility never transgressed that sanctuary. Madame de Maintenon had profoundly inculcated on the Duke de Maine that he must be the more especially particular in requiring all his dues as prince of the blood, in order that he might find means of rendering himself independent of those persons who were determined to make some difference between a legitimate and an illegitimate prince.

The tradition of the lessons of the royal instructress had been preserved in that collateral branch of the family of Louis XIV., and was even not lost in the amiable daughter of the Duke de Penthièvre, who was easy in the intercourse of life, but did not the less assert exaggerated pretensions on some points, without choosing to see that they were entirely out of date. When a person attended in the morning at Château Vilain, to pay his respects to the Prince, the honour of an audience had to be solicited through one of his gentlemen, and it was granted for that day after mass. The prince received all persons presented to him with equally gentle kindness. The nobles were asked to dine with him, the others with his first gentleman. MM. du Hausier and de Florian, who took turns to fulfil the duties of that office, were two specimens of the most gracious urbanity. After the first gentleman's dinner, it was proposed to go and have coffee with him, or to take it with the Prince. The second proposal was always adopted. The company went to the salon, and found there the party that had the honour of dining with his highness, in full force and haughtiness. They did not fail to salute the newcomers with patronising complaisance. There might be some among them ill-dressed, others who seemed deficient in

good manners, but one and all, for fear of being confused with the commoners, had resumed the antique sword or hunting knife, for either ornament was admissible at the Court at Château Vilain. Then M. de Penthièvre continued his attentions to the newcomers with studied refinement. His countenance full of touching serenity, the sound of his voice, and his bearing, all conspired in this prince to express the most lofty and amiable virtue. In him could be seen one of the relics of the time of Louis XIV., that had, it is true, been handed down to us with its graces, sanctified by religion. Nothing was too much to pay for the pleasure of enjoying—if only for a few minutes—the favour of his gentle presence. Yet commoners did not present themselves at Château Vilain, unless they were dependants of the Prince, or had some favour to ask of him. I had once been there with that intention, but not for any favour for myself. To be sure, I could do nothing but be proud of the reception given to me, but still I had no wish to repeat the experiment.

So I refused Madame de Lamotte, and only asked her to put me down at Clairvaux, a place on the road from Bar-sur-Aube to Château Vilain, and pick me up again in the evening after her visit. Having agreed on this, we set out on the 17th of August, 1785, at eight o'clock in the morning, a day I cannot forget. Madame de Lamotte left me at Clairvaux, as we had settled, and went to Château Vilain. She dined there, and was received in a way that surprised the members of that court. The Prince escorted her to the door of the second room, close to the top of the grand staircase, an honour he did not grant to the duchesses, and that he reserved for princesses of the blood; so deeply had the lessons of Madame de Maintenon, on the honours to be paid to illegitimate branches, sunk into his memory.

While Madame de Lamotte paid her visit, I stayed at

Clairvaux, where I was a familiar guest. The Abbot begged me to spend three days there, if I was not afraid of the feast of Saint Bernard; and promised in return that I should hear the Abbé Maury, who was to come that evening and preach a eulogium on the saint. Saint Bernard's day was a great affair at Clairvaux. The poor who came to the abbey gates, received a dole there, and the citizens of Bar-sur-Aube or its neighbourhood were invited to dine in the refectory, where the Abbot took the head of the table on this occasion only every year. I wished to be present at this dinner, partly in order to have my joke at the Abbot, who had spoken in my presence of this custom as an old relic that he was going to put down, and had rather superciliously talked of the guests who attended. The Abbot's figure was handsome, his face good-looking and amiable, so that when he had the honour of being presented to the King at Versailles after his election, the Queen, struck with his appearance, and the grandeur with which he bore the habit of his order, could not refrain from exclaiming, "What a handsome monk!" Dom Rocourt was polite to men, gallant towards women, and, with or without all this, very dull. I could never make him understand, at the beginning of the Revolution, that it was all over with him, his abbey and his monks, and that they would be delighted to leave him. He had the disposal of £15,000 or £20,000 a year, had very nice carriages, and never stirred without four horses and an outrider. He caused himself to be called your Grace by his monks, and the persons who composed his court, and also by the numerous applicants for his favours. He governed as a despot, I know not how many convents of monks and nuns, all dependent on his abbey, and he delighted in the visits of the latter. When despoiled of all this by the Revolution, nothing was left of him but his dull

comeliness, and he retired to Bar-sur-Aube with a housekeeper, and a daughter by her. At the time of the Concordat, I tried to raise him from this condition, and get him a bishopric. Portalis was well disposed to give him one; indeed we had selected Châlons; but, after meditating some time, our friend at last refused. He must have put away his companions, to devote himself seriously to the apostolic functions, and he would not, or rather could not, do so.

I return to Madame de Lamotte. She came back about eight o'clock. I informed her how I was engaged; she wanted to join me, and stay for the feast of Saint Bernard. The Abbot made excuses; the performance was entirely religious, the ladies that generally live at Clairvaux depart for that day, and leave it to the ceremony of Saint Bernard, and to his children; but they return next day, and the Abbot begged Madame de Lamotte to add to their number. He was profuse in respect and reverence. Doubtless the Abbot was aware of the intimate connection between the Cardinal de Rohan and Madame de Lamotte, for he treated her like a princess of the Church.

We walked about in company while waiting for the Abbé Maury and supper; nine o'clock struck, and the Abbé Maury had not arrived; at half-past nine it was settled to wait no longer for him. We were hardly seated when the noise of a carriage was heard; it was the eulogist of Saint Bernard. The Abbot ran to meet him, and forced him to come into the dining-room, without giving him time to change his travelling dress. The travellers had hardly had time to unfold their napkins, before the Abbot asked his visitor from Paris what was the talk there, what was going on, and if there was any news. "What!" said the Abbé Maury; "news? why, where do you live then? There is a bit of news not the

least understood, that astonishes and confounds all Paris. M. the Cardinal de Rohan, Grand Almoner of France, was arrested last Tuesday, the day of the Assumption, in his pontifical dress, and as he left the King's cabinet." "Is the cause of such a severe decree known?" "No, not exactly. There is talk of a diamond necklace he was to have bought for the Queen, and did not buy. But it is not believed that the Grand Almoner of France would be arrested for such a trifle as that in his pontifical dress,—you understand in his pontifical robes, when leaving the King's cabinet!"

Directly I heard this piece of news, I cast my eyes on Madame de Lamotte, who had dropped her napkin from her hands, and stared over her plate, pale and motionless. After the first instant, she made an effort, and left the dining-room. One of the officials of the house followed her; and some minutes later I left the room, and went to look for her. She had already ordered her horses, we went away together, and this was nearly our conversation.

"Perhaps, I was wrong to come away so suddenly, particularly before the Abbé Maury?" "Not at all; your intimacy with the Cardinal is known—almost public. His life may be concerned in this; you ought to be beforehand with letters, couriers, or news. You might have done wrong to lose time by supping at Clairvaux; but can you give any cause for this arrest?" "No, unless it be for some sleight of hand of his—Cagliostro, the Cardinal is infatuated with him; it is not my fault, I never ceased to warn him." "Very good. But what is this story of a necklace that was to have been bought for the Queen? How could a Cardinal have to buy a necklace? And how could the Queen have selected Prince Louis for this, whom she openly detests?" "I tell you again it is all Cagliostro."

"But you have had this charlatan at your house, and are you not at all compromised with him?" "Not the least bit in the world, and I am quite easy; I was very wrong to leave the supper." "No, that was not the least wrong. If you are easy for yourself, on your own account, you ought not to be so for an unfortunate friend." "Ah, you do not know him; as he is in a mess now, he is capable of saying a hundred foolish things to get himself out of it."

"Madame de Lamotte, you are saying much more than I should have wished to hear. I have a last service to offer you. It is ten o'clock at night and we are near Bayet; I will leave you then in charge of a friend, whom you know I can answer for. I will return to Bar-sur-Aube in your carriage and tell M. de Lamotte, and he can come for you in an hour's time in a travelling carriage, with your two best horses, and all your most valuable things packed in it. And you will together start on the road to Châlons this very night, for that of Troyes is not safe for you. You will get to the coast of Picardy or Normandy. Do not appear at Boulogne, nor at Calais, nor Dieppe, whither your description is perhaps already sent, but between these harbours there are twenty places whence you can get put across into England for ten pounds." "Sir, you are tedious; I have let you proceed to your conclusion, because I was thinking of something else. Must you be told ten times over that I have nothing to do with this business? I repeat, I am very sorry I rose from table, as if I was an accomplice of your Cardinal." "Madame, we will say no more; yet I wish to add that, by your own confession, you have more than once been sorry that you had not followed my advice; may heaven grant that in the present business your repentance be not more poignant than usual."

We proceeded in silence for half an hour. As we

entered the town, I begged her at least to burn any papers that might compromise her or the Cardinal. I said, "It is a measure required by honour on one side, and your own safety on the other." She consented to do so, I offered to help her; she did not refuse, and when we left the carriage we went to her room. Her husband had gone out hunting in the morning, and had not returned. We opened a great sandal-wood box full of papers of all sizes and colours. I was in haste to have done; I asked her if there were among these papers any cheques to bearer, or notes of the discount bank; and on her answer that there were not, proposed to throw them altogether into the fire. She insisted on at least a summary examination. We set to work at it very slowly on her side, precipitately on mine. Then it was that, casting cursory glances over some of the thousands of letters of the Cardinal de Rohan, I was sorry to see what a wreck the delirium of love, exaggerated by the madness of ambition, had made of this wretched man. It is fortunate for the Cardinal's memory that these letters have been suppressed; but a loss to the history of human passion. What an age was that when a prince of the church did not hesitate to write, to sign with his name, and to address to a woman letters that a man of our day who had the least self-respect might begin to read, but would never finish.

Among this medley of papers, were found numbers of bills, some receipted, some not, offers of lands for sale, advertisements of precious ornaments, of new inventions, as if all kinds of greediness had combined to draw from the Pactolus flowing at the feet of Madame de Lamotte. I found letters of Bohemer and Bossange which mentioned the necklace, notified the expiry of terms, acknowledged the receipt of certain sums and asked for larger. I asked Madame de Lamotte what to do with them. She hesitated a moment

to reply, and I took the shortest way and threw them into the fire altogether. It was a long business. I left Madame de Lamotte, begging her more than ever to go away. She answered by promising me she would go to bed directly. So I left her in her rooms, poisoned by the smell of burnt papers, impregnated with twenty different scents. It was three o'clock in the morning; at four she was arrested, and by half-past four on the way to the Bastille. The examination I had made of her papers, though very superficial, had solved my doubts; but I had found so much extravagance in the Cardinal's letters, that I thought them both ruined, and through each other.

I learnt her arrest from M. de Lamotte, who came to tell me at six in the morning, in a consequential and tranquil tone. He had taken no part in looking over the documents of his lady wife in the night, because when she came home she said she was going to bed, and closed her door against all the world, not excepting him. He had only heard in the morning, and from his wife, after her apprehension, what was passing in Paris, and why she was conducted thither. He pretended to be quite at his ease. "Madame de Lamotte is only gone for three or four days at most; she is going to furnish the minister with some explanations he wants. I think she will be back by Wednesday or Thursday, and we must arrange to go and meet her and bring her back in triumph." "Sir," said I to him, "I beg to inform you, as you are unaware of it, that this very night I advised your wife to set off for England with you, and that by the shortest road. If she had taken that advice, she would not now be on the high road to the Bastille. I would counsel you to perform alone what I advised for both of you; believe me, it will be much more safe for you than to lose precious time in lulling yourself with delusions, or en-

deavouring to inspire them into others. I know enough of your position to tell you plainly that you are acting the part of a maniac or idiot."

"How sharp you are with me to-day! What has Madame de Lamotte told you?" "She has told me nothing. The more reason why I advise you to make a very speedy retreat. You understand me, very speedy." M. de Lamotte left me, shrugging his shoulders and humming a tune. When he got home, whether it was that he only came to give me a catch word, and to others through me, or that he thought it well to follow my advice, he got into a carriage and travelled to England as quickly as he could. This occurred on the 18th of August, and, only four days later, orders for his arrest came to Bar-sur-Aube.

I have never been able to satisfy myself as to the conduct of the minister when this matter exploded. The Cardinal de Rohan was arrested on the 15th, at noon, and in the explanation he gave in the King's cabinet before the Queen, M. de Vergennes, and the Baron de Breteuil, he declared that he had been deceived by a woman who called herself Countess de Valois de Lamotte. There should have been no hesitation at such a declaration: twenty-four hours would have been enough to have Madame de Lamotte arrested at Bar-sur-Aube. But the day of the 16th, and that of the 17th, passed, and it was only at five o'clock in the morning of the 18th that this pressing matter was executed. Had Madame de Lamotte retained, as they ought to have expected, some one at Paris to send a messenger to her on the 16th, or even on the morning of the 17th, if only she had chosen to make use of the intelligence received at Clairvaux from the Abbé Maury, who had given it in perfect innocence, the lady would have escaped, and then the Cardinal's situation would have been desperate. But to continue: the ques-

tion was the theft of a magnificent set of diamonds, performed by means of a set of complicated negotiations. Madame de Lamotte was arrested, but arrested alone. It was not till five days later that they came to arrest her husband, as if he would have been likely to remain quietly at home, and devotedly prepare for a journey to the Bastille, when warned of what awaited him by the fate of his wife.* And it was not for a week after M. de Lamotte's departure that it ever entered their heads to search for the diamonds. They returned to look for them at Bar-sur-Aube, one would think in the expectation of not finding them; for how was it possible to imagine that M. de Lamotte, when they had given him time, had not carried them off, or placed them in security? So much for Bar-sur-Aube. At Paris they gave Villette, the secretary and confidant of Madame de Lamotte, plenty of time to return to Switzerland; and he took it. For this Villette, the slowest and most imprudent of men, spent ten days at Paris getting information on all sides, and publicly, of how the matter proceeded, and did not decide on departure till forced to do so by some persons who took an interest in him. Even Father Loth, that shameless monk, was allowed time to go and bury himself under another name in some distant convent of his order. How is this conduct of the Baron de Breteuil to be explained? Was it want of skill in his office, or was the tradition lost how to perform the orders of a King of France in a firm and vigorous manner, thanks to an indulgence that here dated from the time of Louis XIV.? Must something be allowed for the re-

* "M. Mustiphragasis, Count de Valois, Knight of St. Louis and of the Crown, of the mounted nobility of Angoulême, has just died in Paris very old and rather poor. He had been the husband of the famous Madame de Lamotte Valois, who so audaciously made a dupe of the Cardinal de Rohan in the business of the necklace. He was generally known by the name of Valois Necklace."—From the 'Journal de Paris' of the 12th of November, 1831.

markable incapacity of the lieutenant of police, de Crosne, whose eyes could not perceive the springs so cleverly set by his two latest predecessors, MM. de Sartine and Lenoir? At that time the preventive police was still in great force, for it is a machine that goes on of itself and only requires not to be disturbed. But the political police was weak, for it greatly depends on the dexterity of the highest persons who direct it. The Baron de Breteuil did not by a long way find in the good credulous M. de Crosne the assistance that his predecessor, M. Amelot, had found in that very dexterous M. Lenoir. It cannot be here denied that the famous business of the necklace was conducted by the Minister, from its commencement, with an incapacity so great as to justify the friends of the Cardinal in accusing the Baron de Breteuil of having contrived by it to accomplish the triumph of his passion and resentment. I have some reason for thinking that the two causes were combined, and shall soon find an opportunity for giving the grounds of my opinion.*

Suppose that the business had been conducted with skill and firmness. On the 15th they ought to have sealed up all Madame de Lamotte's property in Paris, arrested her two secretaries, and with them all who had been intimate in the house. On the 16th they ought to have captured M. and Madame de Lamotte at Bar-sur-Aube, their papers, their diamonds, and also their faithful servants in that city. When all was collected at the

* At the first moment the idea of the King, the Queen, and ministers was that the Cardinal, being involved in debt, had been desirous of appropriating the necklace by making use of the Queen's name. Then Madame de Lamotte made her appearance in the eyes of these people not as author of the robbery, but at most as an accomplice of the Cardinal. It was not till the lady's guilt became apparent that they felt it to be necessary to apprehend her companions. There is an explanation that may be supplied, after reading the memoirs of Georgel, for the delay that surprised the author so much.—[FR. ED.]

Bastille, the indictment would have been easy. For instance, they would have found in Madame de Lamotte's jewel-case a bonbonnière that I had often admired there. It was a box of black tortoiseshell, with a ring of large diamonds round it, of exactly the same size and most perfect water; the medallion on the top of the box was a rising sun cleaving away the clouds from the horizon. On touching a spring underneath this first painting was discovered a portrait of the Queen clothed in a simple white robe, with no more ornament on her head than her hair, raised according to the fashion of the day, and two curls that fell on each side down her neck, and holding a rose in her hand, exactly in the attitude and the dress that Mademoiselle d'Oliva had taken in the part which she played among the thickets of Versailles; and by putting two of the Cardinal's letters in juxta-position with this box, it would have appeared that he had been made to hope that it might have been a pledge of reconciliation with the Queen. It might have made it evident that he had received a full description of this splendid ornament; that he was no longer in doubt of the hand from which he was to obtain it, and that he had thus lost his judgment. They would have seized on many details of great interest that were sure to disappear as soon as the matter was not treated as a simple swindle with nothing extraordinary in it except the names of the personages concerned.

I could not imagine the excess of the Baron de Breteuil's clumsiness or want of zeal in this matter, and conjecturing what he would do from what he ought to have done, expected to be arrested. I remembered then the secret horror I always experienced in passing the Bastille, and I took it for a presentiment. I did not dare to leave Bar-sur-Aube, and trembled at staying there, because I represented to myself the despair of my rela-

tions in case of my arrest at my father's house, to be taken to the head of the Faubourg Saint Antoine (the Bastille). A fortunate accident delivered me from my embarrassment. The town of Bar-sur-Aube had a suit in progress of some consequence, and ready to be tried before the council. The advocate required some one to be sent to second him at the court. The town-council selected me, and I was able to regain the capital without exciting any suspicion of the cause of my journey. My position there was very delicate. Men were much taken up with the affair of the necklace; and yet it was not cleared up. I never went anywhere without being put into the witness-box. I adopted the course of secluding myself from all society. I did not attend the courts, and entirely occupied myself about the cause for which I had been sent. The business had caused a division among the population of Bar-sur-Aube, as was the case in any affairs of importance that concerned small towns. The side against whom I was writing and pleading, considered my presence at Paris very inconvenient, and tried to get me away. I received letters dictated by the purest friendship, but without the authors being bold enough to declare themselves, containing the intelligence that I was going to be sent to the Bastille. I was conjured to get away with all speed. These pieces of information found me the more inclined to uneasiness, because I thought, as I repeat, that my arrest was most probable. The last letter that I received made some impression, because it had been artfully contrived to make me suspect that it came indirectly from a chief clerk in the King's household, with whom I was on terms of great intimacy, but whom I had not gone to see from motives of delicacy. Then I wanted to have recourse to the great protector of the afflicted of the province, the Count de Brienne. By my unlucky visit I had given him such

a fair opportunity for overwhelming me with reproaches, that I did not like to expose myself to them. I went to look for my old friend, M. Finot, who, faithful to the axiom of the President de Harlay, considered that while awaiting the moment for clearing oneself it was better to be beyond the reach of the first blows; and to induce me to fly, he quietly reminded me of one of our clients who had come under my observation, and surrendered himself to purge a contempt of court forgotten twenty years before, and had very nearly lost his head by it, though under the protection of President de Lamoignon, who had given him this dangerous advice. I think I should have determined on flight, if I had only had my own interests dependent on me, but I was deputed by the city of my birth, I was employed to defend her in a cause on which the council was immediately to pronounce judgment. To abandon such an affair, to fly from a sacred duty, was to proclaim myself guilty. I even felt that longer consultations might make me liable to suspicion. I put myself into a state of self-concentration, and having deliberated on the reasons for and against, I came to the determination to remain at all costs. I had not to reproach myself with a single false step, or piece of advice that an honest man need disavow; so I had nothing to be afraid of, if, as then seemed likely, the matter should be sent up for trial; and if it were treated as a political matter, the worst that could happen to me would be to spend six months, or a year at most, in the Bastille. Persons were every day to be met in the world who had undergone this, and were none the worse for it. When once I had taken my part, I endeavoured to accustom myself to the impending retirement. I prepared my baggage for the Bastille. I made it up of small editions of our best authors, then called Cazins, from the publisher's name. I added a case of mathematical instru-

ments, an atlas, a sufficient provision of paper, pens, ink, and body linen. I packed it all in a trunk, which I placed at the bottom of my bed like a friend on the watch, to follow me when the time should come. I did more. I went two or three times to the entrance of the Faubourg Saint Antoine and to the Arsenal garden, to accustom myself to the sight of the Bastille, and to map it out as much as possible from a distance. Counting the narrow air-holes that served the purpose of windows, I endeavoured to conjecture which one it might be that would perform the office of conveying light to me.

Thus I managed to accustom myself insensibly with the idea that had caused me so much terror. The governor of the Bastille, the unfortunate M. Delaunay, was from my own province. I had heard him defended more than once against the calumnious imputations that Linguet had allowed himself to make against him in his Memoirs on the Bastille, and on this head I had heard it said that he performed his painful duty with all the kindness and politeness that were compatible with it. And this information was not false; for the persons who had been arrested and were not implicated in the business of the necklace, vied with each other in doing the governor justice as to the treatment they had experienced. M. Delaunay was the first victim of a revolution that claimed so many others, and I have felt some satisfaction at thus having an opportunity afforded me of paying a tribute to his memory. So I felt the more easy on this account. I at once cast off my terrors, and returned to composing with perfect freedom of mind the best memorial I ever made in my life on the cause of Bar-sur-Aube. I went on the journey to Fontainebleau, during which the cause came up for judgment, and I gained it according to M. de la Galaisière, who very much wished to tell me, on the rising of the Council, that I had made the questions

so clear that there was not the least difficulty in their determination. The receipt of my memorial on Bar-sur-Aube, and the decree of the Council that had crowned it, was a little local triumph for me which entirely removed any prejudice that my connexion with Madame de Lamotte might have left there. I had refused to receive any payment for my mission, and so my fellow-citizens, desirous of showing their gratitude, elected me, though not twenty-five years old, one of the *notables* of the town, a position now represented by that of member of the municipal council. This was the first occasion on which my fellow-citizens honoured me with their choice, and no other election gave me such great satisfaction, though I always gained their votes for the most eminent public employments of which they had the disposal.

During my absence the affair of Madame de Lamotte had been sent before the Parliament. They had been imposed upon in making this transfer. The Parliament had been given charge of the affair by virtue of letters-patent, and a form of commission. Certainly there had been no desire, in adopting this form, save that of preventing the trial from passing through the two usual steps of the course of law; but the world did not think of it in that manner, being very little aware of what these two usual steps were. It was better known that this form of commission had been sent to the Parliament when they were expected to deal justice more severe and prompt. There were several examples in support of this opinion. The trials were remembered of the Constable de Bourbon, of Marshal Biron, of the Constable de Montmorency, of Keeper of the Seals de Marillac, of the Cardinal de Retz, and more recently of the Count de Lally. There was the more reason for believing that another great example of severity was likely to be given, because the letters-patent, in their preamble, considered as proved

all the facts that related to the purchase of the necklace by the Cardinal on the Queen's account, and the theft by Madame de Lamotte. So there was no more occasion for inquiry on these points, for having been put forth by the King, and the Parliament having enrolled the letters-patent containing them without remonstrance, they became evidence unquestionable. It was seen, under the principles that then governed us, how absurd it was to have an inquiry, before the session, whether what the King had advanced in public letters were true or false. Such an idea not only was contrary to all the principles of the monarchy, but even bordered on the crime of treason. As the Parliament had adopted the letters-patent, it was obliged to agree to the spirit of them. Taking then as proved all the facts that they contained, its duty was to carefully inquire to what degree the King's majesty had been offended. The negotiation, the purchase, the robbery of the necklace, were more or less culpable, but still were nothing but means to an end. The grand fact that predominated in this miserable business was this, that M. and Madame de Lamotte had had the audacity to counterfeit; that at night, among the groves of Versailles, the Queen of France, the wife of the King, had arranged a meeting with the Cardinal de Rohan, had spoken to him, had given him a rose, and allowed him to cast himself at her feet; and that on his side, a Cardinal, and grand official of the Crown, had dared to believe that this appointment had been made with him by the Queen of France, the wife of the King,—that he had kept it, had received a rose there, and thrown himself at her feet. There was the crime, the punishment for which was imperatively demanded by respect for religion, for royal majesty, and morality, which were all grievously outraged. Perhaps the time had already arrived when it became necessary to repress by a severe example the blind passion that

played with what had hitherto been considered most sacred. At the present day, when the Revolution has too much broken down the traditional respect for royal personages, who can conceive that the Parliament should not have looked on the scene in the thicket at Versailles as a mere swindle, and the actors as rogues and a dupe? The Revolution had already taken place in those minds who could regard such an insult to the King in the person of his wife with such culpable indifference or insolent carelessness.

At the first commencement, no one could believe that the trial before the parliament could have such an end; and I felt convinced that Madame de Lamotte would be more severely treated than she was—that is to say, that she would lose her life At ten o'clock at night, some days after my return from Fontainebleau, I received a request from M. de Crosne to go to him immediately. I did not know to what cause I should attribute such a message, and it gave me some concern. I looked at my Bastille luggage, not yet disturbed, and thought I should have to use it this time; but since the trial was already before Parliament, it would not be for long. I went to the Lieutenant of Police. As soon as he saw me he said: "Sir, I have to speak to you for the Countess de Lamotte. I am sorry to have disturbed you at so late an hour, but I was in haste to see you." This commencement was not reassuring. M. de Crosne added, "I have just left Madame de Lamotte, and she selects you for her counsel. Here is your order of admission to the Bastille. I request you to be there to-morrow at its opening, from nine to ten o'clock. The poor lady has not seen a friend's face for two months, and I promised her without fail that you should be at her orders to-morrow morning." I thanked M. de Crosne for his order of admission, and replied that I

could not accept the choice that Madame de Lamotte had made of me; her affair was most serious; I had neither the experience nor the talent that she required. It would be extravagant presumption on my part, and I refused. M. de Crosne persisted; and objected, that if I required assistance, which he did not in the least believe, I could call in the aid of as many of my colleagues as I pleased. He made me especially observe that it was a case which would cause a very great sensation, and might make the reputation of a young advocate, and he insisted that I could obtain all the information and assistance that I might want. M. de Crosne could not manage to persuade me, though he was eloquent for perhaps the first time in his life. We parted. Next day came a fresh message from M. de Crosne, and another visit from me. He gave me an open letter from Madame de Lamotte, who could not understand the difficulties that I made about undertaking her defence, and begged me to come and see her. The official added his own very pressing entreaties, and supposed from my refusal, or perhaps from what Madame de Lamotte had told him, that I imagined there was some danger in the performance of the duty proposed to me. He used every possible means to reassure me on this head, and ended by trying to persuade me to see M. de Breteuil. I refused again; I could say nothing to the Minister that I had not said to himself, and he would not persuade me to do what I refused to the Lieutenant of Police. M. de Crosne insisted still more, I really do not know why, and made me perceive that greater readiness on my part to comply with the views of those in power would not injure my advancement, or my good luck, and continually repeated, "See the Baron de Breteuil." I protested to him that I could not have that honour, because I did not see what it could induce me to do; and I left him,

after having asked his permission to write him a letter in answer to that of Madame de Lamotte. He might have known through one of his confidential persons, to whom I had expressed my sentiments, that I thought the theft of the necklace a miserable incident, while the scene in the grove appeared to me a capital charge. Apparently his own opinion was the same, and it suited him that the counsel of Madame de Lamotte should at the bottom of his heart share the same views. I answered the letter that she had written to me, imputing my refusal merely to my deficiency of experience and talent for so serious a cause, and added that it would be useless for her to insist on it any more; for my denial was conscientious, and I would not retract it. I heard no more of it.

Instead of me, M. de Crosne selected M. Doitot as counsel for Madame de Lamotte; he was the family lawyer of the Lieutenant of Police. He had been in practice a long time, and was not without some fame. At the age of more than sixty years he had retired to chamber practice, where he was still sought for as having a clear knowledge of the law. Even this old man did not come in contact with Madame de Lamotte without suffering for it. She turned his head. He really believed all the stories she told him, became enthusiastic for her and for her innocence, and made his entrance into the business by a printed memorial, one of the most extravagant that had ever come from the pen of an advocate since memorials have been invented. Nevertheless, it had a miraculous success, for it was the preface to the "Arabian Nights;" and it was furnished by an old lawyer of seventy!

Cagliostro was violently attacked in the memorial of Madame de Lamotte. M. Thilorier rushed into the arena to defend the man of miracles. For the first time were the caverns of Memphis, whence the hero had

issued, and the labyrinths of the Pyramids, where he had been brought up, spoken of in the courts of justice! The sacred obscurity that veiled his origin, his education, and his entire life, were adduced as presages of marvels that should one day disclose themselves, and astonish the universe. Meanwhile, by way of a prelude to his superhuman destiny, Cagliostro had cured the sick, assisted the poor, consoled the afflicted, and allowed some rays of the infinite light to penetrate into various places; but he could not conceive why he was in the Bastille, implicated in an affair with which he had no connection. This absurdity, which the advocate Thilorier, a man of excellent sense, was the first to turn into ridicule, was thought quite reasonable and fashionable.

The wife of Cagliostro had been imprisoned in the Bastille at the same time as her husband. An advocate, M. Polverit, quickly pounced upon her case, and gave us, in a lively and well-written memorial, the defence of Seraphina Feliciani. Her origin was no better known than that of her husband. She was an angel in human form, sent on earth to share and soothe the life of the man of miracles. Radiant with a beauty above that of other women, she was only a model of tenderness, sweetness, and resignation; no more, for she can only conjecture the contrary vices; her nature offers to us poor human creatures the ideal of a perfection that we may be able to worship, but never to understand! Yet this angel, without the power of sinning, is under lock and key; it is a cruel anomaly that cannot be too soon put a stop to. What connection is there between a being of such a nature and a criminal indictment? This new folly had likewise its success!

The advocate Blondel appeared for Mademoiselle d'Oliva. His short memorial was a little model, appropriate and well written. He passed over the social rank

of Mademoiselle d'Oliva, who did not entirely partake of the innocence of Seraphina Feliciani; but her advocate represented her as a young person whom it had been too easy to deceive, and whom they had made to act in the groves of Versailles a part that she could not in the least imagine. Such was the skill of her advocate, and such is usually the power of skilful writing, that the public became prepossessed in favour of Mademoiselle d'Oliva, and this prepossession passed from the public into the members of the Session.

Villette in his turn appeared on the scene, defended by M. Jaillant Deschainets, a little humpbacked advocate, and as spiteful as accorded with his stature. He even managed to make something out of the position of this wretched man. He drew him, as he really was, extremely facile, always ready to do what was asked of him, without being much aware of the drift. He confessed that Villette had traced at the bottom of the letter that caused the transfer of the necklace the words *Marie Antoinette de France*, but this form of signature is not that of the Queen, nor of any other person. Then to trace a line, with no signification at all in it, at the base of any document whatever is not a legal offence. So far it was all very well; but the advocate, Jaillant, subsequently cast on Madame de Lamotte the blame of having caught Villette in her toils; yet it was true that he had come to offer himself as a prey already bruised all over with wounds, received in snares that were worth not much more than those of Madame de Lamotte.

Every one of these memorials was greatly in vogue, and called attention to the advocates who wrote them, and to the persons who furnished the subject. And now a person, emulous of this sort of fame, suddenly and unexpectedly appeared on the scene. He published a

memorial; he said his name was Bette d'Etienville, and that he was a country magistrate. For two years he had followed Madame de Lamotte like her shadow. He had seen and heard all; had been present at all the scenes. He passed in review the Cardinal, Cagliostro, his wife, and all the personages of the drama. He contrived a position for himself in each action, and that the position of a very able man. He, with his genius, contended against those of Madame de Lamotte and Cagliostro united. The contest was sometimes doubtful, but he always triumphed at last. It is a fine thing to sing one's own praises. But whence came this new arrival? Whom had he a grudge against? What right had he to publish a memorial? This memorial is a romance full of animation, of interest, and good style. All the world read it, and was interested in M. Bette d'Etienville, without troubling their heads to know whether he was a real personage, or a fantastic being.

Such are the childish games with which one of the most serious matters ever presented to the judgment of the Parliament was complicated. How could the Session itself allow these extravagancies of imagination to displace the solid forms of defence? Was it a previous determination to bury under indecency and ridicule the crime they were unwilling either to prosecute or punish? Perhaps this may be believed. The house of Rohan, powerful in itself and through illustrious marriages, desired to save at any price one of its members who had been seriously compromised. The Prince de Condé did not refuse the assistance due to a family allied to his own. Such influences had full weight upon the upper class of society in Paris, disgusted at the commencement by the forcible arrest of the Cardinal, and not reconciled by the angry severity of the Baron de Breteuil. Dependants of the house of Rohan were

found in every direction, and infused sympathy for the Cardinal even into the middle classes. It was hoped, and not unreasonably, that this mass of opinion would be sufficient to turn Parliament, from severe measures. That great body began to lose its self possession. The party in opposition to the court gained strength daily. De Calonne, the Finance Minister, had estranged the First President de Aligre, for some matter in which the latter had been really to blame; but the moment for explosion was ill chosen. M. de Aligre had none of the qualities that make a great magistrate. He rather had the opposite faults; but he had a singular dexterity in managing those around him, and since 1774 had always contrived to have a majority at his court. In this state of things the old government might have continued, at least for some time. But if, in 1786, M. de Aligre did not favour the opposition in the Parliament, he allowed it to arise; and it met with encouragement at Versailles, even very near the throne—a most unheard-of circumstance. At the time of the Cardinal's trial this opposition had not obtained a footing, but it already was in existence, and only awaited opportunity. It is to be conceived that it made trial of its power in this unhappy business. It only exercised too much influence. The court was hurt, and M. de Calonne took advantage of this moment of irritation to get his assembly of notables decreed. The Session could have no doubt that this assembly had been contrived in opposition to it, and never forgave even the successors of M. de Calonne. The disastrous results of these first intrigues are well known.* The scattered portions of this picture must be gathered together, in order to form an estimate of the

* The Parliament of Paris was put in possession of the affair, called that of the necklace, by letters patent of the king, dated the 5th of September, 1785. The preliminary examinations took nine months.

strange and scandalous matters in the prosecution and judgment of the affair of the Cardinal de Rohan.

On the 31st of May, 1786, after eighteen hours of deliberation, the Session—all chambers together—gave a decree by which the following were condemned:—

The Count de Lamotte to be branded and to the galleys, and his wife to be branded, and to imprisonment for life, and their property confiscated.

Retaux de Villette to be banished from the kingdom.

The woman D'Oliva to be dismissed.

Cagliostro and the Cardinal de Rohan acquitted of the acccusation brought against them.

M. de Lamotte, who had escaped by flight from the judgment of the session, led a degraded and miserable life in England and in France, whither he returned in 1814. He died in Paris in the year 1831, in the month of November.

The decree of the Session against Madame de Lamotte was executed on the 21st of June, 1786. Imprisoned in the Salpetrière, she remained there six months, at the end of which she managed to escape and joined her husband in England. She died in London in 1791, at the age of thirty-four years, in consequence of a dreadful fall she met with in a paroxysm of raging fever.

The day after the decree of the Session the Cardinal de Rohan received the king's orders to return the Cordon of the Order of the Saint Esprit, and give up his charge of Grand Almoner. He was banished to his abbey of La Chaise Dieu in Auvergne, and afterwards to that of Marmoutier near Tours. He obtained permission sometime afterwards to return to his bishopric of Strasburg. In 1801, after the concordat, he resigned and retired to Ettenheim, where he died the 10th of February, 1803.

Cagliostro, acquitted by the Session, was, nevertheless, obliged to leave France after a confinement of nine months and a half. He took refuge in turn in England, Switzerland, and Italy. Accused at Rome before the synod of the Inquisition as an adept in Freemasonry, he was condemned to imprisonment for life, and underwent his punishment at the castle of Saint Leon, where he died in 1795.

His wife Seraphina Feliciani followed his fate, and was also condemned to imprisonment. The date of her death is not known.

As for Retaux de Villette and the woman D'Oliva, their celebrity ended with the trial about the necklace.

These details are extracted from the interesting work of M. Campardon, in charge of the records of the empire, entitled, *Marie Antoinette and the Trial of the Necklace.*—[FR. ED.]

CHAPTER IV.

Return to Bar-sur-Aube—Measures taken to secure my Election as Deputy—The Electors—The Grand Bailli and his Costume—General Assembly of the Three Orders—M. le Vicomte de Laval—Le Comte de Brienne—Jurisdiction of Chaumont—Dupont de Nemours—M. Guillaume—Nomination of Gompert-le-Chevaux—My Nomination to the États Généraux—Reception at Bar-sur-Aube—Insurrection of Paris—Capture of the Bastille—Brigandage—Decrees of August 4.

I LEFT Paris bearing with me the famous result of the council that allotted a double representation to the Tiers État, and the report of the prodigious effect produced by the publication of this result in the capital. As I passed through Châlons I myself gave it to the superintendent and to the syndics of the province. The cause that had taken me to Paris could no longer be thought of; public attention was occupied by matters of too great interest for the smallest portion to be obtained by a little quarrel between two subaltern officials in a corner of the province. Indeed people did me the honour of believing that I had made use of this quarrel as an excuse for reaching the court of M. Necker, and of making myself known to the great man of the day. I allowed this interpretation to pass, because it was less ridiculous than the reality.

I returned to Bar-sur-Aube to take steps for fulfilling the engagement I had made to Madame de Staël to get myself elected a deputy. Every service I could desire had been already done me; for during and notwithstanding my absence my fellow-citizens had nominated me elector

for the assembly of the Bailiwick. Unluckily for me, Bar-sur-Aube did not nominate directly to the States-General. This town, that of Joinville, and their jurisdictions, joined at Chaumont, the chief place of the electoral Bailiwick. Now at Chaumont there were circumstances unfavourable to me, for it was at the cost of the dignity of this town that I had six months before arranged the court of judicature at Bar-sur-Aube. Nevertheless, I had confidence in the mass of votes I brought with me; and my hope increased when I found at Chaumont, with the same tenets and the same ambition as myself, M. Becquey, who likewise occupied at Joinville the position of syndic of the Tiers État.* M. Becquey was of my own age. I

* Becquey, a minister of state, director-general of roads and bridges and of mines, and deputy for fifteen consecutive years of the department of the Upper Marne under the Restoration, was born at Vitry le Français, in 1760. Elected a member of the provincial assembly of Champagne, and general syndic of the department of the Upper Marne, he was chosen by the electors of this department to represent them in the legislative assembly in 1790. There was formed an intimacy between him and the author of these memoirs, founded on the same religious and political views, that lasted nearly forty years, and survived all changes of government. In the Assembly Becquey sat in the ranks of the Constitutionals, near Quatremère, Beugnot, Dumas, Jancourt and Ramond, supporting, sometimes at the risk of his life, the eternal principles of reason, right, and liberty,

Under the Directory, his royalist feelings caused him to be chosen a member of the secret committee of Louis XVIII. This committee, whose duty was to give useful information to the King about events and about men, and to prepare the basis of a reconciliation between the Bourbons and the nation, should a favourable occasion appear, was composed of Royer Collard, Becquey, the able Montesquieu, the Marquis Clermont Gallerande, and Quatremère de Quincy. It was dissolved in the time of the Consulate, and Becquey betook himself to study in retirement, and did not issue from it till 1810, to take his seat in the Imperial Council of the University, by the active persuasion of Fontanes.

Under the Restoration, Becquey, deputy of the Upper Marne, was appointed successively director-general of commerce, Counsellor of State, Under-Secretary of State in the Home Office, and lastly, director-general of roads, bridges, and mines.

He performed these last functions for thirteen years, from the 17th September, 1816, to the 19th of May, 1830, and the recollections of his administrations are still fresh in the office of the Minister of Public Works. His name remains attached to the construction of canals ordered by acts of 1821-22.

In 1831 Becquey resigned his position as deputy of the Upper Marne, and

had made his acquaintance in the law courts when we were both attending them; and he already possessed among us youths the reputation he has preserved unclouded to the present day, that of an upright man and one of great intellect. They all swore by him at Joinville, and he was at least as well accredited there as I was at Bar-sur-Aube. Our coalition was induced by our respective positions. It seemed clear that by uniting the two bodies of electors of Bar and Joinville we should carry off two thirds of the votes; and as a majority only was required for the election, it seemed certain that we should be elected, even allowing a great deal for desertions. We both were too confident of it. We could not hear the names that were proposed against us without a secret joy and a good deal of apparent scorn. M. Becquey had by nature the kind of pride that preserves a man from any questionable steps. This feeling is honourable, and therefore contagious; he had communicated it to me. Besides, we were both a little tinctured with price at the part we had played in the provincial assembly, and we rejected as far beneath us the measures necessary, in such a case, for creating a party where a person has not one; and, what is still more difficult, for keeping together one already gained.

The electors of the three orders came in crowds to the General Assembly, presided over by the Baron de Mandat, the Grand Bailli of Chaumont. The Baron de Mandat was a gentleman in the fullest sense of the term, full of honour, generous even to prodigality, and satisfactory to every one except his creditors. The electors united under his leading to attend the mass of the Holy Ghost,

retired completely from political life. He died at Paris on the 2nd of May 1849, at the age of 89 years.

The characteristic of his life was unison in good.—("Life of Becquey," by Beugnot, Paris, 1852). [FR. ED.]

a reverential and necessary preliminary to our great assemblies. The most striking thing was the dress of the Grand Bailli—a hat with feathers, short Spanish cloak, falling neck-tie, long sword, and rosettes in his shoes. We had not yet adopted dresses of all shapes, given them up and taken to them again, and we were easily astonished at anything beyond everyday clothes; besides, M. de Mandat was small in stature, witty and facetious, somewhat comic in character and appearance, and in his costume of Grand Bailli was not unlike Crispin in his Sunday dress. The mass was got through somehow amid all the noise. But at departure everyone rushed to see the Grand Bailli pass and enjoy his appearance. He marched with two halberdiers before him, giving blows right and left to the too curious electors. One of them was thrown down and trampled on; the others took his part. The disturbance became violent when M. Becquey sprung into the pulpit to endeavour to separate the combatants. That was the first of innovations; and it was another that a layman should ascend the pulpit of truth. It produced immediate effect; the appearance of M. Becquey in the pulpit became the *forte virum quem;* people left off pulling each other's hair that they might listen. Like a practised orator, M. Becquey took his audience on their weak side; he enlarged on the dignity and inviolability of the electors, and blamed the Grand Bailli's halberdiers for having hurt this one and touched that other; but in the name of this very dignity he begged the electors not to be so hasty in taking the law into their own hands, and to respect decorum more scrupulously. He engaged that the Grand Bailli would punish the zeal of his halberdiers as rather too rough. His last words were a touching exhortation to peace, confidence, and emulation, as to who should best perform the lofty functions of an elector. Unanimous applause was heard

in the place which an instant before had echoed with shouts of anger, and everybody went home quietly. The triumph of M. Becquey was complete, and it would have seemed strange if they had not sent to the States-General a young orator so ready in calming the passions and lending to wisdom all the seductions of wit. The three orders met in General Assembly. The king's attorney made a very long and insignificant discourse. The Grand Bailli, happily expeditious by nature, added some words, and sent off each order into its special chamber.

The order of the clergy named the Abbot of Clairvaux as President, with two parochial clergy as his secretaries. The parochial clergy were by far the most numérous in this Chamber, and brought to it an unrestrained hatred of the monks and the higher clergy. Without doubt there were some honourable exceptions; but generally these rash and very ignorant clergy had lost respect for the sacred chain that connects the different degrees of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. They blindly proceeded to the seizure of tithes, the abasement of the higher clergy, and the dispersion of the religious orders. Had they been left time and means they would have established Presbyterianism without wishing or knowing it. The parochial clergy had named the Abbot of Clairvaux as their president; but loudly declared that it was only to the large fortune of the abbot that he was indebted for his selection to that honour, because he was beyond all comparison the member of the Chamber who could most splendidly represent them, that is to say, give them the best dinners. But, however good were the dinners he gave, they did not prevent their showering sarcasms on him during his presidency. He had to submit to a sort of reproaches and anti-monastic quips such as well-bred secular clergy would not have allowed themselves to use; and no one gave less cause for this persecution than

Dom Rocourt, the last Abbot of Clairvaux. He was a handsome, well-made man, of a refined politeness with men that approached the borders of gallantry with women. An equally fortunate exterior had given him a reputation for superiority which he by no means merited. His mind was narrow; he had little or no learning, and not the least foresight. He thought it an impossibility that they should overturn the edifice of Saint Bernard. When he saw it overthrown before his eyes he could hardly believe it, and died thirty years afterwards, still expecting its restoration. Surely it was inhuman to persecute so simple a man!

The Grand Bailli presided over the chamber of nobles in virtue of his office. The Count de Choiseul d'Aillecourt and * * * were appointed secretaries. The first houses of France were represented in this assembly, but chiefly by proxy. This Chamber was not animated by any very marked design. The Duke of Orléans was the largest landowner within the bounds of the Bailiwick of Chaumont. He had conferred his powers on the Viscount de Montmorency Laval. The wife of this nobleman, being independent of him in fortune, also appeared among the landowners of this Bailiwick. Less confiding than the prince, she had not thought it well to entrust her husband with the honour of representing her; and as it was necessary for a person to possess a deliberative voice in the assembly on his own account before representing anyone else, objections might have been raised to the Viscount de Laval's entrance into the Chamber. Some precisians objected to it, but the majority passed over the difficulty.

The Viscount de Laval had come from the Palais Royal with full confidence that he should carry all votes with him for the Orléans party, whose noble commissary he was. He had caused to be forwarded in advance a

scheme of official instructions to the deputies of the States-General for the district, composed by the Abbé Sièyes, who was so unhappily famous for his numerous concoctions of Constitutions. This scheme had been sent to all the districts where the Duke of Orléans had property. Besides, he brought with him a scheme of instructions by the same author for the assembly of the Bailiwick; and in order to back him up on his mission he was flanked by an Abbé de Simon, one of the second-rate rogues of the Palais Royal, a man of spirit and audacity, presenting in his single person all the scandals that his cloth could cover. Finally, that no provision for success might be omitted, these gentlemen brought with them a good number of decorations for a chapter of ladies, which, in truth, had as yet no existence; but which the Duke of Orléans had a fancy to create, and the insignia of which he now began to distribute to ladies whose credit might be of service to him, in consideration of the urgency of the case. If to these honourable methods of persuasion be added more ordinary ones, such as dinners, balls, evening parties, promises to any extent, engagements that might be thought sacred, and all this in the midst of a little provincial town inhabited by a poor country population, the Viscount de Laval may well be pardoned for having had no doubts of success at the beginning.

This nobleman was, besides, possessed of a great fund of self-confidence. Leaving his elder brother, the Duke de Laval, to be famed for eccentric speeches, he had won renown by deeds. He had been known to hasten to the reviews of Potsdam, to kiss the boot of the great Frederic there, and then come and plume himself on it at Paris, as if it were some heroic action. He had, of course, brought back from this remarkable pilgrimage a permanent enthusiasm for Prussian drill and

discipline. He was numbered among the zealous for mechanical immobility, narrow ranks, and blows with the flat of the sword. He had long tormented the fine regiment of Auvergne, of which he was colonel, with his mania for inventions, with his caprices, and his harshness; and as he did not make use of more than a small portion of sense, qualified that little with a good deal of insincerity, and led a loose life in other respects; he had entirely disgusted Louis XVI., and, as a natural consequence, was thrown into the Orléans party. Twenty years later I met him again in Germany in the service of the Emperor, and at the head of a newly-formed body, called, I think, the Gendarmes of Ordnance. I even was myself charged with the painful mission of licensing him and his corps. If I get so far in my Memoirs I will narrate what befel him before my eyes; and any one would be very clever to recognise the same Viscount Montmorency Laval that I have just described.

But he was, at the time I speak of, a nobleman of the French court, polite, and of tolerably good manners, though affected. Apparently M. de Becquey and I had been pointed out to him as men who ought to be gained. We became acquainted at his fêtes and dinners, and he asked us to come to him one morning, as he had something of consequence to communicate. We attended, in the expectation of some unforeseen news from Paris; but he wanted to read to us in great state the scheme of instructions of the Abbé Sièyes. They ought to have given the Viscount de Laval a master in modern elocution before letting him depart upon his mission. He read his scheme in a high key, regularly emphasizing the letter M whenever it came next to the letter I at the beginning of a word. As the word *impost* obtruded every moment in the discourse, the reader, gaining animation as he went on, improved on his method of pronouncing it, and

ended by singing it. We were already prepared for this, as well as for the contents of the famous scheme; and thus we took no interest in anything but the elocution, which excited in M. Becquey and myself a very keen desire to laugh, which only good luck prevented from exploding. We had strength enough left to thank the Viscount de Laval for his communication, to praise the generous ideas comprised in the scheme, and to see the exhausted orator drink a glass of water; but we had no sooner passed the threshold than we had a rare laugh at the reader and at his certainty of having penetrated us with admiration and gratitude.

Notwithstanding the pains taken by the Viscount de Laval, and the efforts of his assistants, which proceeded to almost indecorous extremities, he could never manage to gain his point in the chamber of the nobles. He was not more fortunate when he addressed himself to that of the Tiers-Etat. The situation of the Orléans party was very good, for they numbered, especially in the third chamber, a great many officers, registrars, and principal farmers of revenue, all influential men; nevertheless this party aroused a distrust that had gained all classes at Chaumont, and nothing was less calculated to allay it than the manners the Viscount de Laval had adopted there. So he got nothing by his dinners, his balls, his declamations, nor even by his Order; for he had brought up this reserve before he retreated. The lieutenant-general of the Bailiwick had admitted two canonesses at a ball. This might be regarded as a singular place for the reception of nuns; but in every respect these were nuns only in jest.

Thus far the prudence of the chamber of the nobles merited nothing but praise; but it afterwards gave a singular proof of ingratitude by rejecting the Count de Brienne. This nobleman, worthy of respect on all sides,

22825

did not share the unpopularity attaching to the name of his brother. It was known that if he had been a member of the same cabinet, it was because he could not avoid it; for he had no personal ambition. A zealous and sedulous patron—the chamber of the nobles seemed, if the expression may be permitted, paved with gentlemen whom he had brought forward, for whom he had obtained appointments, and whose position he had established. It was expected that the nobility would take advantage of such an occurrence as had never before taken place, to prove their gratitude to him, and console him in private for the kind of public disgrace he had experienced; but nothing of the sort was done. Young men were seen intriguing against him, creatures of the house of Brienne, who owed to the Count their late promotions in the lower ranks of the army; and when I freely addressed reproaches to them, they coolly answered me, "Yes, the Count de Brienne is an excellent man; but he is a man who is done for, and must be left quiet at home." This disloyalty was carried to such a pitch that I do not know whether this benefactor of the country obtained as many voices as I did. The election fell on the Count de Choiseul d'Aillecourt, a cavalry colonel, certainly an honourable man in more than one respect; but who did not display the talents expected of him in the National Assembly. They gave him M. Clermont d'Esclaibes as a colleague, a gentleman unknown till then, and not much better known from his presence in the Assembly.

The third chamber had no decided character. A large number of the electors walked about the streets or crowded the inns, waiting to see what would be done with them. They had been called together for the purpose of naming the officials, or rather of electing the secretaries, for the Grand Bailli's lieutenant was

naturally president. M. Becquey and I made our first mistake by neglecting this appointment, in which we might have then succeeded. When the parties are not yet formed it is useful to accustom the electors to your name by this first vote. Besides, the secretaries are constantly before the eyes of the assembly; they canvass without speaking, by no means the worst way of so doing. The secretaries being named, the assembly was divided into sections to examine the schemes of official instructions sent up from the Communes, and to prepare a scheme for the Bailiwick that should be referred to the assembly. M. Becquey and I were appointed especially to work at this, and we took great pains with it. I was not struck with anything very remarkable in the bundle of schemes that passed beneath my eyes; though doubtless there would have been real interest in reading the simple expression of the wants and grievances of the Tiers-État, from one end of France to the other. The best elements for composing the history of the time might have been found in them; but all these schemes had been copied from printed ones that were put into circulation, with some additions that were the work of the local politician. For example, the numerous communes of which the Duke of Orléans was seigneur, had scrupulously copied the scheme prepared by the Abbé Sièyes and the occasional additions formed a strange contrast to the rest. Thus after a demand for the perfect separation of the legislative, executive, and judicial powers, the liberty of the press, trial by jury, and the abolition of all serfdom, the peasants insisted that their yard-dogs should be delivered from the clog, a sort of heavy stick that was hung to the neck of these poor brutes by orders of the lord of the manor, to hinder them from catching a hare if it should happen to be within their reach; I say if it should happen—for dogs of this kind are not inclined

to hunt, and rarely stray far from the houses; but there was such a desire for the suppression of the clog that, do what I would, it remained in the scheme of instructions for the Bailiwick. Afterwards, having voted for all the liberties that had as yet been emitted by the brains of the Abbé Sièyes, the peasants made a further requisition to be allowed guns for their defence against the wolves. One of these schemes alone seemed to me worthy of attention; it came from a Commune near Châteauvillain. The composer had amassed a crowd of demands more or less exaggerated, and ended with this impudent formula: "Let us give power to our deputies to request of our sovereign lord the King his consent to the previous demands; in case of his granting them, to give him thanks; and in case of his refusal, to UNKING him." The last verb was underlined. I carried this scheme to the *procureur du roi* and declared that I thought it would be proper for him to denounce it to the Chamber, so that it should be excluded from the number for consideration, and that he should reserve the right of instituting a criminal prosecution against its authors and compilers. The *procureur* seemed angry at the discovery, and faithfully promised to do as I advised, but as he too was a candidate, and feared to make himself unpopular by doing his duty, the insult to the King's majesty was not taken notice of; the word transpired and was repeated; indeed, at last, it came to be considered as clever. The author had probably no notion of making anything but a wretched *bon mot*, and had not the least suspicion of having made a prophecy!

While I was occupied in examining the papers a powerful intrigue was being contrived against me. The city of Chaumont, a former hunting seat of the Counts of Champagne, is perched on a rock surrounded on all sides by a barren country. In order to make

the best of this unpromising locality, they had established a court of Judicature, with a very extensive district that included Bar-sur-Aube and Joinville. Chaumont only existed by means of its jurisdiction. Nothing but a law-suit could make any one climb this rock, and the only trade was in stamped paper. So the number of counsellors, advocates, attorneys, clerks, bailiffs, and innkeepers was vast and made up the city. Bar-sur-Aube, whose lot had fallen in a better situation than Chaumont, had endeavoured for some time to shake off the yoke of its jurisdiction, and had accomplished it for a moment through the edicts of 1788. It was known that Joinville had the same desire, and was about to be equally successful, when the edicts were withdrawn; so Chaumont appeared to think its existence depended on not sending deputies selected from Bar-sur-Aube or Joinville to the States-General, especially any who had given their adherence to the system that had endangered its existence. It was a very prudent precaution on their part. What ought M. Becquey and I to have done then? We should have closely united the electors of Bar-sur-Aube and Joinville, and marched against those of Chaumont with colours flying. The strongest party would have gained the day, but we did not even prepare our battle array. The electors who were drawing-room company remained faithful to us, but some of that greater number crowding the inns, and whom we affected to neglect, were daily seduced from us.

A personal adventure of my own also weakened our side. The commissioners for the preparation of the instructions met every evening in the refectory of the Capuchin Convent to prepare their work. This meeting gave me some confidence. The articles of the periodical meeting of the States-General, the partition of legislative power between them and the King, and the reservation

of the imposition of taxes to the Tiers-État alone had already been passed. People had become used to listen to me, and I had gained authority. On that account, I fancy, a snare was prepared for me. We had come to the directions about judicature, and a member of the Assembly, the Bailli of Châteauvillain, the only public officer, then asked, "What is to be done with the local Parliaments?" I answered shortly and very imprudently, "Suppress them." At these words a sort of electric shock of rage seemed to take possession of the honourable members present; they all began to threaten me in word and gesture. An advocate of Montiérender, named Delassire, left his seat and rushed at me with clenched fists. I thought I was going to be sacrificed to the glory of the Parliaments. Besides, the scene took place after dinner. Madame de Sevigné has said, somewhere, that a Breton neighbour is a very bad neighbour after dinner; a native of Champagne is not much better. All that the men who remained cool in the midst of this uproar could do, was to protect my escape, and even in the street my angry colleagues pursued me, crying out, "To Lamoignon, to the high court of justice; Oh! the servant of Brienne," and other kind expressions, just the things to get me knocked on the head on the spot if the bravos of the party had not been busied in the inns.

It will be supposed that this scene discouraged me completely, as it revealed to me the danger, or, at least, the difficulty of my position, which up to that time I had scarcely perceived. I thought I must give up the preparation of the scheme, and also the candidature. The evening after my unfortunate adventure, I received a visit from the Bailli of Châteauvillain, who expressed his regret at having been the innocent cause of the tumult, and from some members of the Assembly, who were ashamed of what had occurred. They urged me

to return the next day and explain my opinion fully, assuring me that the majority would arrange so that I should be heard with the respect due to my opinion and to my person.

I had not courage to yield to them; I retired into my tent without thinking that the Greeks would abstain from coming to seek me there. I was not at all necessary to the taking of Troy. I brooded over ridiculous projects of revenge against the advocate Delassire; I wanted to send him a challenge. I was answered that the advocate Delassire was a man of sixty, who had never fought in his life, except with strokes of the pen or blows in verses, and would laugh at my proposal. I wanted to wait for him in the street and give him a good caning; but I was strongly dissuaded, because he was able to furnish a collective retort, so I should not have the best of the bargain. I was reduced to champ the bit alone, and only to go out from my rooms for the indispensable duty of dropping my ballot into the urn. This cowardly resolution made my affairs almost desperate.

Dupont de Nemours once told me that he was placed in a very similar position at that time for the same reason. He too was a commissioner for the preparation of the schemes of instruction for the Bailiwick, and when they came to the article of the Parliaments, he voted for their suppression out of pure economy. As at Chaumont, this proposition caused most violent excitement; but the danger was greater, for the place of meeting was on the first floor; they wanted to throw Dupont out of window, it was open, and men in the heat of passion were proceeding to execute this sentence of death, when Dupont perceived among the spectators a very corpulent man who was not interfering. He rushed at him and seized him round the body with as firm a grasp as he could. They

could not drag him away; "What in the world do you want?" cried the fat man. "Indeed, Sir," said Dupont, "every one for himself, they are going to throw me out of window, and I intend you to act as my mattress."

This appropriate and courageous jest turned anger into mirth. Dupont did not in the least retract his proposal against the Parliaments because he has never retracted anything in his life, and, what was more, he was named deputy. Perhaps I should have had the same reward if I had been brave enough to uphold my views against Delassire and Company; but Dupont was unequalled in good-humour and bravery.

The scheme of instructions for the Bailiwick was adopted in all its elegance, and just as it is printed, to the eternal honour of the meetings for its preparation, held after dinner in the refectory of the Capuchin Convent at Chaumont. The next business was the nomination of the four deputies, which was done singly. The first named was the king's attorney. At this scrutiny M. Becquey had still a large number of the votes from Joinville, and I from Bar-sur-Aube; but they supported both of us at once; and Chaumont, which we could have conquered for one, beat us when united. The same want of sense on our side gave them a majority in the second election, as that was gained by a M. Laloi, doctor, surgeon, apothecary, and wine-broker at Chaumont; after all, however, a good sort of man, and not wanting in sense, but of vulgar manners and destitute of education. At the third nomination we began to come to an understanding, and the danger became pressing from the cabal at Chaumont. The notion it adopted was that of loudly demanding an agriculturist. The king's advocate and the lieutenant-general poured themselves out in pastorals to the best of their ability; they, in their discourses, praised the fields, and the pleasures of the fields, and the

men of the fields. It was for these latter especially that the States-General were convoked; sad would be the fate of the country that did not send up agriculturists. The music of these pipes was soothing to the ears of the majority of the electors, and they rallied round a M. Moul, a farmer, who was absent from the Assembly from illness. When informed of the honour conferred on him, he flatly refused, and had the good sense not to leave his plough for politics. There was still one more deputy to elect. Our party, thrice beaten, could do no more, because in the war of elections, as well as any other, every defeat entailed desertions. But the cabal thought that they must come to some compromise with the electors of Bar-sur-Aube. They offered to elect a deputy from among them, provided it was not me. After much discussion as to whom they should select, they united on M. Jauny, an advocate of Brienne. M. Jauny had been for the space of twenty-five years an advocate at Paris, without ever having pleaded a cause or had his name mentioned anywhere. He was among the two or three hundred poor devils of advocates that came with their long robes to Paris, with sallow countenances and uncertain steps, to fish for some bits of writing or some matter-of-course signatures requiring a fee. Never since Champagne had been called by that name had human being offered in shape, mind, and face a more perfect type of the man of Champagne; and the province was bound to elect him. Having retired for some years to Brienne, he had not been better received at the great house than was due to his personal amiability; and he had made himself a member half from resentment, half from pride in his title of advocate to the Parliament of Paris. He constituted a small opposition at Brienne composed of few members besides himself and his old female servant. That was enough for the cabal

of Chaumont to adopt him warmly. M. Jauny, when without his gown, could, like some of his colleagues, find curious garments to put on his back. The clothes he wore at the assembly of the Bailiwick were not unlike the get-up of the knave of hearts; and, as in other respects the two figures were sufficiently alike, the electors called him Quinola. This nickname resulted in good fortune for him. They were proceeding to the last election, and all cried out, "*Up with Quinola!*" By the power of shouting, Quinola was put up, and M. Jauny elected.

The cabal, thinking they had thus acceded to the wishes of Bar-sur-Aube, desired also to become reconciled to Joinville. They took up the notion of having a substitute named, and some electors sought M. Becquey to know whether he would be willing to accept this deferred honour. He was out, and they found no one to speak to but M. Guillaume, in whose house he, like myself, lodged. I have already had occasion to mention what M. Guillaume was—that is to say, he was the man the most inclined that I have ever seen in my life to joke upon serious matters. "Gentlemen," answered our facetious host, "you do great honour to M. Becquey, but I doubt if he will accept the very heavy responsibility of being a substitute; he is not strong enough for it. You have elected M. Moul, who is said to be ill. M. Jauny can breathe, but that is all. M. Becquey is not strong. You want *Gombert the horses*, he could, at need, carry your whole deputation on his shoulders."

Those present, among whom I was, repeated to M. Guillaume what had been told him a thousand times, that his jokes were always unseasonable, and that he would do better to discover M. Becquey, to let him judge for himself of the proposition made him. "No," answered M. Guillaume, "there is no time to lose. I

am going this moment, but it is to propose Gombert the horses, and I do not come home till he is elected. It is supposed I am not a good patriot. I will show what I can do!"

In very truth, he flung down his night-cap, which he never pulled off except at dinner, and in his loose dressing-gown, his most usual one for the whole day, he ran into the street, visited the inns, stopped in the open places, and demanded Gombert the horses, with loud shouts; he is the saviour of the country, and the only man that can support the deputation. M. Guillaume got numerous groups to follow and applaud him. He marched at their head to the courts where the electoral assemblies held their sittings; he met at the foot of the stairs Gombert himself, who asked him the meaning of his joke, and threatened to pay him wages for it on the spot. He put himself in readiness to do so, and M. Guillaume had no other way of escape but hastily to mount the steps and take refuge in the courts. There, thinking himself secure from Gombert's marks of gratitude, he continued more vehemently to insist on his nomination. There was surprise, laughter, at the candidate and his proposer, the manner of the one and the dress of the other. But the scrutiny was commenced: some in joke, others in earnest, threw the name of Gombert the horses into the urn, and he was elected.

This Gombert was a man of most robust constitution —great shoulders, great head, square figure—a sort of ill-made Hercules. He had a stentorian voice, and as the rudeness of his manners was in harmony with the proportions of his person, the people, who distribute their quips so as to strike to the purpose, had felt that it would not be doing him justice to call him simply Gombert the horse, and without troubling themselves with the grammatical concord of numbers, had called in

the plural to support what the singular seemed too weak for. So M. Gombert was known by the extraordinary nickname of *the horses.* It was given to him, and he accepted it without an idea that it was any stigma.

So the election of the Bailiwick of Chaumont for the States-General was made more than complete. M. Moul, as I have mentioned before, did not accept his nomination; and it happened that, not without intending anything more than a joke, a deputy had really been named in the person of M. Gombert. He, for the matter of that, did no more and no less than the other seven deputies of the Bailiwick: not one of them spoke a word or wrote a line. The two deputies of the nobles sat on the right; the advocate Jauny where he could be best out of sight; the two provosts and the four deputies of the Tiers-État on the left. All spent three years without being seen in this assembly, and left it rather more obscure than they entered it.

The strange success of the last nomination, the part M. Guillaume had taken in it, and the glory he got from it, were the cause of mirth to the guests at his house. Like men of sense, we consoled ourselves with songs. The victorious party were a little ashamed of their victory, and we made them a good deal more so. After a few days employed in hissing the play that we all had reason to be discontented with, I parted with M. Becquey, who went to spend some time with his wife's family, one of the most honourable and amiable in the province; and, on my side, I went to my father-in-law's. It was at that time that I contracted with M. Becquey a sort of brotherhood in arms that has lasted forty years, all in kindnesses, in touching attentions, and generous actions on his side, and on mine in gratitude and devotion.

We have often considered whether we should regret or be thankful that we were not both elected to the

Constitutional Assembly, and at last agreed to be grateful to Providence. We were equally young, and not destitute of some ambition for renown that early and easy success had fostered in us. Who can tell how far this former feeling might have led us astray? If we had been so unfortunate as to be praised for a first error, we should have very quickly fallen into a second. And how easy it was to go far astray. The path of illusions was so wide and attractive! Doubtless we should have arrived with our souls honest and intentions pure; but for that very reason we should have embraced at the commencement the cause of the Tiers-Etat that had deputed us, and at what period and how could we have separated from it? And if we had remained attached to it, whither might it not have conducted us? The few survivors of that time have not found out their mistake, and M. de Lafayette, the father of the unrepentant, numbers as many adherents of different degrees of fervour as there remain members of the left.

When I reached my father-in-law's house, I had great trouble to persuade him that I was not nominated to the States-General. I told him the names of those who had prevailed; and, as was natural, did not forget M. Gombert the horses. Then he became angry, and took the truth for one of those stories that his sons-in-law sometimes took the liberty of telling him. When at last he was reduced to believing me, after viewing the subject on all points, he congratulated me on not having been put into such bad company. He said, "They wanted to name me also an elector for the Assembly at Langres, but gave me as companions four rustics whom I should have sent to dine in my kitchen; so I sent them all to the devil. There is nothing I would not do to do any good, but everyone in his proper place." "Yes," replied I, "provided every one can stop there." "Oh, you

are always afraid. Has not the king got a hundred and fifty thousand men?" The king's hundred and fifty thousand men were the final response of my father-in-law to all my apprehensions: he removed all doubts and closed all questions in this convenient manner.

Yet I considered the little arsenal he had around him, and saw him with great plenitude of confidence continue his ancient tyranny over the inhabitants of the barony of Choiseul. I did not believe that things could remain long on the same footing. I was anxious for the personal security of my father-in-law, who was not a man to grant the slightest concession. I addressed myself to Madame Morel. One was sure of a hearing when one made any sort of accusation against her husband. I explained my uneasiness, and she must soon have shared it. I advised her to make a mild use of severe rights that were spoken against on all sides; she promised me that she would work to effect this, and really did so every day at her own great risk. I also infused into her mind certain germs of patriotism, which were so developed there by the contradictions which she experienced from her husband, that at last they gave us uneasiness of quite a different nature.

After having accomplished this little mission in my father-in-law's house, I returned to Bar-sur-Aube; and my fellow-citizens received me well. It was known that I had been beaten at the elections for the sake of the county, and they were grateful to me for my defeat. Besides, the man who had been preferred to me was so ridiculous that they required no explanations, but were contented with laughing. So I resumed my usual employments at the "Bureau Intermédiaire," and applied myself to them more closely than ever; but the times had suddenly changed. During the previous year, confidence had widened the paths that hope seemed to open: this

year minds were a prey to the anxiety that marks the expectation of some great catastrophe. Either fear or expectation of the future devoured the present. I felt this myself; I was a partaker of the illusion that the States-General would not touch provincial assemblies. But I saw so many other points of equal gravity questioned; minds appeared to me so heated and so violently distracted, that I felt paralysed by vague terror. Besides, my position was altered; there was nothing more for me to do but to enlarge the sphere of my powers as much as I could, even were I to be obstructed by the superintendent or his delegate; and this was just the thing to suit my youth and ardour. The depositories of any sort of authority exercised it with timidity, or had to defend it against men who had returned with an entirely novel audacity from the assemblies of the bailiwick, and already rehearsed the part they were to enact later. Every day produced virulent pamphlets against the clergy and nobility. A design was becoming manifest of keeping the third estate in a perpetually increasing state of irritation against the two other orders; and some historical researches, published by well-known writers, seemed to have no other object. Amid these rumours came the period for the meeting of the States-General. Certainly all the antecedents would have been contradicted had this meeting proved unanimous between the three orders and respectful to the Throne. So I was prepared for, and more saddened than surprised at, the taking of the Bastille, the insurrection in Paris, the King's going to the Hôtel de Ville, the discourse of M. Bailly, and the parody on Ecce Homo by M. Lally Tollendal.

When the news of the capture of the Bastille arrived at Bar-sur-Aube I feared that some castles of less importance would be taken, and I hastened to Choiseul.

As I approached it from Chaumont I found the scattered population upon the high road, and was much alarmed, but I regained confidence on seeing that every peasant had a green bough in his hand, and on hearing the discordant notes of some village fiddlers. I inquired the reason of all this rejoicing, and they told me that they expected M. Necker, who was coming to Chaumont, or perhaps had already arrived. I quickened my steps, and learnt on entering the town that M. Necker himself had arrived and alighted at the inn of the Fleur de Lys. I hurried thither that moment and had much difficulty in getting to the inn through a crowd of people, wondering, enchanted, full of emotion and crying, with tears in their eyes, "Long life to our preserver! long life to our good minister! long life to M. Necker!" The most vigorous of the band were already prepared to draw his carriage, and I remember I was strongly affected by this scene so novel to me. I reached M. Necker, but not without many efforts and the influence of my brother-in-law, who was municipal officer at Chaumont. His influence would not have been enough without the aid of a stratagem that M. Guillaume alone could have invented. He took a scrap of paper, rolled it up in his hand and raising it above the bystanders, he cried out, "Gentlemen, please let me pass, M. Necker has sent me to buy him some snuff, and here I am carrying it to him."

Every one made haste without raising a doubt as to the oddity of the commission or of the messenger, and we reached the minister. I found him in the company of his daughter and Dufresne Saint Leon, who had been sent to fetch him. I was very well received, but hardly had time to utter some words of congratulation in my emotion before they came to tell him that the Countess de Brionne had just arrived at Chaumont and had

entered the same hotel. The arrival of such a guest, at such a moment, disagreeably surprised both father and daughter. M. Necker said to Madame de Staël, "We must ask if she will see us." My brother-in-law undertook the mission and returned saying, that Madame de Brionne would be ready in a moment; this moment was one of anxiety. M. Necker soon passed with Madame de Staël into Madame de Brionne's rooms. My brother-in-law, who was present at the scene, told me that she received them in their triumph with calm dignity. Conversation was immediately commenced on the causes that had determined Madame de Brionne to retreat so speedily. She answered M. Necker, "Sir, it was all that is going on at Paris, to which your presence will put a stop, at least I hope so; you will have much to do." And as Madame de Staël expressed her regret that Madame de Brionne had decided so speedily, she answered, "Madame, yours is an age of confidence and a moment of good fortune. Enjoy your father's triumph; no one can be more desirous for its permanency than I am; but allow me to pass to the gates of France, to await the issue of all this." And they parted with professions on the one side respectful, on the other cool, and somewhat displeased.

When these illustrious travellers left Madame de Brionne's rooms their means of departure, or rather the instruments of their triumph, were prepared. Between the palms, the crowns, the musicians, the men who were harnessed to the carriage, the joyful cries of all the population, they had only time to give me some tokens of interest. M. Necker and his daughter, while they seemed affected even to tears, but embarrassed with these honours, yielded themselves up to them, probably in order not to waste time. And who would have told me that hardly two years would have passed before, not

far from Chaumont and again in an inn, I should have great difficulty in defending M. Necker from the insults of the same people who now harnessed themselves to his car? How many times in my life has this sorrowful comparison struck my thoughts!

Madame de Brionne, of whom I have just spoken, had been one of the most beautiful women of her time, and the dignity of her character had preserved her from the dangers that would have surrounded her beauty. She had borrowed nothing from her times but what she could not refuse without seeming ridiculous, and, above all, she had remained a great lady to the full extent of the words. Before the Revolution she had been intimate with the Abbé de Périgord, who was Bishop of Autun, and was himself celebrated for the extent and elegance of his intellect, but beneath it concealed a great stock of family pride that has not yet left him. It was a title to admission with Madame de Brionne.

At the time of the first insurrection in Paris the Bishop of Autun, a deputy of the States-General, learnt that Madame de Brionne was on the point of making her escape. He hastened to her. "Why this hasty resolution, Madame?" "Because I do not wish to be a victim, nor to witness scenes that horrify me." "But must you leave France for that?" "Well, where would you like me to go?" "I do not advise you to remain in Paris because you are alarmed, nor even to retire to one of your estates; but go and spend some time in a little provincial town where you are unknown; live there without making yourself remarkable, and no one will discover you there." "A little provincial town—oh, M. de Périgord, I can be a peasant if you please, but never a bourgeoise." The expression is worthy of a Rohan, the widow of a prince of the house of Lorraine.

At the moment I write we have no more aristocracy, its language is lost. Yet it is well to preserve some of these expressions of a lofty insolence that are like medals stamped with the spirit of the age. The last Archbishop of Narbonne was Dillon, nominal uncle of all those Dillons that we have seen making their way in the world with their names and fine figures as their whole fortune. He himself was a man of five feet six or seven inches, well made, with a large chest, the bent of whose inclinations, the air of whose head, whose gestures and voice testified to natural superiority. His most apparent fault was an inordinate love of hunting. Louis XV. blamed him for it at his levee. M. de Dillon was then no more than Bishop of Evreux, but his hunting equipments were the scandal of Normandy. "My lord bishop, you are a great hunter," said the king to him, "I know something about it. How can you forbid your priests from hunting if you spend your life in setting them an example of it?" "Sire, for my priests hunting is their own vice, in my case it is that of my ancestors." The same M. Dillon, when appointed Archbishop of Narbonne, put no restraint on his tastes, and his expenses had soon put his affairs in disorder. It came to the knowledge of Louis XVI. that he was very much in debt. This prince, a lover of order, and dismayed by the sad example just given by the Prince de Guemenée, preached economy and payment of debts from morning till night. One day he said to M. Dillon, "My lord archbishop, they say that you are in debt, and very deeply?" "Sire," answered the prelate, "I will ask my steward about it and have the honour of informing your majesty." There is no place in society at present for the feeling that dictated these haughty answers, which are not understood by the descendants of those who made them, for the middle classes have

extended over the next not only their power, but their thoughts, and fashions, and language.

I met a good number of persons on the road and imparted to them the joyful news of the passage of M. Necker through Chaumont, and they everywhere seemed delighted at it. They were there only curious to know what had been passing at Paris. I gave satisfactory information, and crowned it by that of the return of M. Necker, whom I had met at Chaumont. They wanted to know if I had really seen him; I declared it as solemnly as I could, and all the rest of the day they kept coming to the house to see a man who had seen M. Necker. What a calm followed his return, at least in the province where I dwelt. Yet I was not without anxiety how to preserve my father-in-law's mansion from insult, and made my wife and sister come thither. Both were beloved by the peasants, for they were never tired of interceding for them. My wife especially was beloved, and even after her marriage they called her nothing but our good young lady. The ladies arrived, laughed at my apprehensions, and their presence attracted society to the house.

Confidence was established, and I was delighting in the happiness of the life we led there while Paris was so cruelly rent, when a piece of intelligence that burst on France like thunder destroyed our security—that of the brigands. One beautiful evening we were quietly eating our supper, with a number of guests, when a labourer from Choiseul arrived in great agitation to tell us that the brigands were spreading over the country, and were advancing on the house to sack it. Everyone cried out, "But how about the brigands, where do they come from?" I did not extend my inquiry thus far, and only wanted the labourer to say whether he had seen these brigands; he stated that he had recognised one band passing the wood

of Montot, another the wood of Pennecière, two small woods not far from the house. I began to believe the more because this labourer did not want for sense, and was a confidential man about the house. M. Morel, persuaded of the truth of the story, did not wish to lose time in deliberation. His ancient courage was ready, quite perfect; he ordered the guns to be loaded, and showed me that the arsenal I had so much derided was not too large now. He sent out three men as scouts, one on the hill of Saint Nicholas, at the back of the house, and the two others on the roads to the woods of Moutot and Pennecière, with orders to retire to head-quarters on the first appearance of the brigands. He lined the two approaches to the château with armed men, and reserved to himself the central position, from which all orders should issue. He allowed me to remain with him and act as chief of the staff. When his arrangements were made he caused a good allowance of brandy to be served out to all the company, and informed the ladies that they must be pleased to go down into the cellar on the first shot. I cannot help laughing when I think of their anxiety—they would have much preferred to depart from the position menaced with a siege. They timidly made the proposal to M. Morel, but he saw nothing but difficulties and dangers in their departure. Besides, when once the plan of defence was determined on, the old soldier was easy and left the rest to fortune. The night passed without the scouts falling back, or the guard being attacked, or the chief of the staff having an order to give, or the ladies descending to the cellar. Next morning they laughed heartily at their own fright, and the military preparations of the evening before. But M. Morel thought it would not be prudent to remove the defences. It was true that the brigands had not appeared at the points named the night before, but

they had incontestably appeared, and with effect, in the neighbourhood. Mansions that had been burnt were mentioned, and others that were burning still, and my father-in-law said, aloud, that they had not dared to knock their heads against his; but he therefore judged that there was the greater reason for keeping a good countenance. So the state of siege lasted a whole week, though its severity daily diminished.

Then I did what I could to make out by what means this report of brigands had come to the place where I was living; for if they had really effected their purpose, it might have given an indication of the cause. I could not discover anything to clear up doubts and uncertainty. The labourer of Choiseul who had brought us the news said he had received it from an inhabitant of Collombey, a neighbouring village. He was full of the notion when he got to Choiseul, and in the uncertain light of the moon had seen, or thought he had seen, the brigands at the two spots he had stated. I went back to the man of Collombey, and he told me he had heard it from one of Montigny. I did not pursue my researches any further, because I perceived plainly that I should only get to channels that had passed this news from one to the other, and scared one another in the most perfect good faith. I also had occasion to read letters from deputies of the Tiers-Etat, containing information that the brigands were roaming over France, and that it was necessary to arm to repel them. These deputies, otherwise obscure persons, were only instruments of those of the first order, but no one knows whence originated this strange expedient. It has been attributed to Mirabeau; but he would not accept the honour, and complained to me that no one lends but to the rich.

This fear of brigands created brigandage. Every man who had a weapon snatched it up; everyone who had

not, took one by force, and in a moment France was covered with bands armed by chance, without discipline or control. This institution of an internal military force was afterwards organised into a national guard; but at the beginning it was only a blind power. Taking example from the States-General, which had become the National Assembly, in which committees were daily multiplied, every town and village had its committee of superintendence, and its permanent committee for national protection; and the irregular movements of these new-fashioned bodies were surprisingly well calculated to paralyse the action of the old authorities. In making the divisions, the barony of Choiseul fell to the lot of the committee of superintendence of Montigny le Roi, a considerable village, and one of the keys of Bassigny to the south, as Clefmont is to the north.

During the first days of the month of August, this committee sent commissioners to search the Château de Choiseul to see if the Marquis of Vaubecourt was not hidden there. I got my father-in-law out of the house, and did the honour of it to these gentlemen. I had the doors of every room opened to them, even the most retired. The commissioners entered them all, with a courage that nothing but religious respect for duty could inspire; and when they were convinced that M. de Vaubecourt was not hidden anywhere—not even in the drawers of my father-in-law's desk—I asked them to do me the favour of taking breakfast. The commissioners, feeling easy on the subject of their mission, obligingly accepted. When the little amenities of a meal had relaxed their brows, I asked them to expound to me by what law the Marquis of Vaubecourt was forbidden to come and live at the Château de Choiseul, if he had a fancy for doing so; and what they would have done with him if they had found him there. The answer I

received was that M. de Vaubecourt was an aristocrat, and denounced as such; and if he had been found he would have been taken before the committee, and they would have decided what to do with him. The gentlemen added that I might be quite easy, as they never acted without orders. I pretended indeed to be easy, but I was not so, either on M. Vaubecourt's account or on my father-in-law's.

Two days after the visit of these commissioners, the resolutions of the night of the 4th of August were everywhere reported in Bassigny. I gathered from them that nothing was any longer safe, and I pressed my father-in-law to retire to his property at Arbigny, but could not persuade him. He received letters from M. de Vaubecourt, who advised him to remain firm, and not to make any compromise of the least of his rights; for that all this was only a fire of straw. And besides that his personal inclination lay that way, he thought himself bound in gratitude to M. de Vaubecourt. He was faithful, and, in consequence, nearly lost his life for having paid the price of his land twice over—once to the Republic at home, and once to his friend, the lord of the manor, abroad. He was bold enough to persist in playing this dangerous and honourable part till the time when he was denounced by an unfaithful messenger, arrested, and accused before the revolutionary tribunal at Paris for this good action. I cannot doubt that a letter of M. Vaubecourt's had been opened by the committee of superintendence at Montigny, and that we owed the visit of the commissioners to this circumstance, then a very common one.

On the publication of the resolutions of the 4th of August, the committee of surveillance at Montigny, reinforced by all the patriots of the country, descended on the Barony of Choiseul like a torrent, and in two or three

days pitilessly exterminated the hares and partridges that had lived there a long time without being touched, thanks to my father-in-law's mercy. They fished in his stews, and even came into the court-yard of the house to fire at pigeons and destroy the dove-cote. These fine fellows then extended their insolence to my father-in-law, so far as to offer to sell him some of his own fish, of which they had a superfluity, and of his pigeons, that they did not know what to do with. I was but little excited by these patriotic excesses; I had enough to do to restrain my father-in-law, though precautions were taken to keep everything away that might furnish arms to his rage.

But I must do justice to the peasants of the barony, for not one of them mixed with these bands, composed of patriots from Montigny, and of smugglers or scamps from the neighbourhood. The peasants had come to understand very well that any improvement of their condition was to be expected from the law alone, and that any excess on their part would not redound to their honour or profit. M. Morel was angry with them for not undertaking to defend him; but in all good faith could they be expected to defend an order of things that I do not like to dwell on for a moment?

The best fields in the three villages were the property of the lord, and called his demesne. The peasants were bound to cultivate them, sow and reap them, on the lord's account, and to bring the produce into his barns; every portion of land, every house, every head of cattle, owed him service; he had the right to keep for himself any property that was sold, always on condition of repaying the purchaser what he had paid, but taking advantage of the lord's dues upon sales. There was thirlage of ovens, of weights, and markets. In fine, the children only succeeded their parents on condition of

having lived with them; if they were absent at the time of decease, it was the lord who inherited. The charter conferring these rights came down from the twelfth century, and had been granted to the inhabitants of the barony by one Gualtier de Choiseul by way of grace and as a form of enfranchisement. What could have been their case before?

Assuredly, when the resolutions of the night of the 4th of August suddenly fell among a population thus treated, some excesses might have been excusable in the outburst of their joy. As I said, none of any sort were committed, and when all the fish in the stews had been caught, the hares slaughtered, and pigeons destroyed by strangers, matters nearly resumed their usual course.

I received pressing letters recalling me to Bar-sur-Aube, where matters were not going differently from other places. All the mischief at Choiseul seemed to be over; and I had great confidence in Madame Morel, who, half from interest, half out of hatred of domestic tyranny—which she confused with public tyranny—had set up the tricoloured cockade, preached liberty before her husband's face, and had already gained a distinguished reputation for patriotism for some leagues around. So I left Choiseul with the ladies. We were in a rather nice carriage, and stopped at the village of Mandres, between Choiseul and Chaumont, where we usually baited. We found in one of the front rooms of the inn a dozen peasants assembled round a table furnished with glasses and bottles, among which could be seen an ink-stand, some pens, and something like a register. I went into the second room with the ladies. The mistress of the inn, who took an interest in us, came to tell us to be on our guard, and, above all, to say nothing to the peasants in the first room. "I do not

know what they are about," said the good woman; "but they are there from morning to night, drinking, swearing, and abusing everyone, and they call themselves a committee." I asked no more; I called the postilion who brought us, and told him to put to his horses at once, whether they were baited or not, for I wanted to be off very quickly. What I gathered from the deliberations of the committee redoubled my desire of placing some distance between ourselves and this new power.

When I saw from the window that the horses were put to, I pressed the ladies to be gone, and especially begged them to moderate the merriment inspired by what was passing while they went through the front room. I followed them in some uneasiness on this score. As they went through, an honourable member said to them, "A good journey to you, my pretty ladies!" One of them answered in a rather derisive tone, "Au revoir, gentlemen of the Tiers-Etat." Though the insult was only in the manner in which it was spoken, an explosion was produced, and the honourable members rose in a fury to rush at the ladies. I threw myself before them. They had time to get out of the door, hastily enter into the carriage, and the postilion spurred his horses. They escaped; but I remained in pledge for them. One of the more violent seized me by the collar, and said that I should suffer for their insolence, and indeed I did receive a shower of cuffs that would have knocked me down if the man who held my collar had let go. The woman of the house, seeing this, began to cry *Murder! assassins!* Her cries were so dreadful that I hear them still. Her son-in-law and two men, who were at work in the house, ran up and persuaded them to listen to me if they would not let me go.

The son-in-law said, "They did not make you a committee in order to beat the passers-by, but to question

them; do your business." This observation restored a little calm. One of the members of the committee placed himself before the register, visibly alarmed at the task that awaited him there. The president, who had so far held me by the collar, asked me what brought me to Mandres, and whether I was not against the nation. "What sort of a question are you putting there?" said the hostess. "Why, this is the gentleman who goes by here a dozen times a year, it is M. Beugnot." And then she detailed my name, my condition, and where I lived, adding the names of my father, my father-in-law, and my two uncles, and with such assurance that one would have thought she was reading the preamble of my marriage settlements. The secretary of the committee stared, and despair of ever being able to write so much was visible in his eyes. I felt the president's fist relax its hold on my collar, and thus furtively recovered my liberty. A member of the committee rose, eyed me over, and cried, "Yes, it is indeed M. Beugnot. I recognise him; he was at our assembly at Chaumont." He called in one of his colleagues, who had also been an elector and recognised me as well as he did. The president did not deny it. "It is his fault, the worse for him; why would he not speak? People must tell their names to a committee." The mistress of the inn, trembling with rage, cried louder than the president, "Did you give him time, you old barbarian? It is a shame. Go and hold your meeting somewhere else. I won't have you disgrace my inn." The committee divided on this reply, and the honourable members were coming to blows among themselves. A victim a moment before, I now became the peace-maker, and cried out aloud for a calm. They asked me to drink the health of the nation—I accepted; to that of the brave deputies—I did it again. They wanted to give me some companions to bear wit-

ness to my patriotism on my journey. I had a great deal of trouble in avoiding this delicate attention. I escaped, bruised, feasted, and honoured by the same persons all in one quarter of an hour.

I expected to find the carriage a short distance off, and walked slowly, revolving in my mind how much the chapter of unforeseen events had increased in the last two months. Who could have told me when I left Choiseul that I should experience such treatment before getting to Chaumont? How had the public order, under which I had travelled in safety all my life, so quickly disappeared? When was that security as natural to France as the air itself?

I rested at Chaumont from the fatigues of the journey. My brother-in-law told me that there was also a national guard in that place, and two or three committees which worked in emulation, that I should find as many more at least at Bar-sur-Aube, and that the old officials had nothing better to do than to give up their place; and then, without much minding my ill-humour and discomfort, he kept on merrily joking about the good people, and even on my unfortunate adventure. I reproached him sharply. "What do you mean?" said he, in answer. "It is impossible to keep cool among these disgraceful follies. A man must laugh or cry. Both are humbugs, and I choose the pleasantest; but what a capital idea it is of the Committee of Surveillance at Mandres to hold their sittings in an inn on the high road. To-morrow I shall propose to that of Chaumont to do the same."

When I got back to Bar-sur-Aube I found that my brother-in-law had not deceived me; the authors of anarchy had been spread over France symmetrically enough. The Committee of Surveillance seemed to be trembling at the projects of the aristocrats, and the

greater its fear the wider it extended its operations; while the committee of the national guard was making efforts to arm the towns and villages. These committees were formed by some unknown inspiration of which no one could give any account, and kept up a correspondence with the National Assembly. I found the ancient municipality irritated against these new-comers. I calmed them, and advised them to bear what they could not prevent. I took the same advice to myself, resuming the functions of syndic advocate in the Bureau Intermédiaire. I employed myself on the taxes and roads alone, and also in appeasing the disputes arising from the conflict of the old authorities with those that unexpectedly appeared everywhere. The Bureau Intermédiaire threw themselves into this with a zeal that I should like to praise again at the present time, when, of all the excellent men who composed it, not one survives, and it contributed not a little to preserve the district of Bar-sur-Aube from the deplorable excesses that took place in neighbouring divisions. In this year the provincial assemblies, the Parliaments, the Government—in a word, all the institutions of the first rank—were granted vacations. To the intermediate commission of the provincial assembly was given the duty of performing the work that should have been done by the Assembly itself; and by analogy the Bureau Intermédiaire had to do the work of the Assembly of the district. This change laid on us by the circumstances increased the work that devolved on me; and although I felt convinced that it was for the last time, I did not acquit myself of it with the less zeal and attention. These duties accomplished, I was curious to go and observe more closely this new but vast power that was shaking France to its foundations. I went to Paris, led thither by an unreasoning resentment. The law for the division of France into departments

was carried, and I wished to get the district of Bar-sur-Aube detached from the department of Chaumont, and attached to that of Troyes. I easily obtained this, because there really were conveniences that agreed with my little passion, and were worth more than it was.

CHAPTER V.

Reminiscences of 1793—Order for my Arrest—Reflection in the Labyrinth, Jardin des Plantes—My Arrest—The Inspector and the Gendarme—The Conciergerie—Companions in my Dungeon—The Infirmary—The Doctor—Night in Prison—The Girondists—Ducos, Fonfrède, and Fauchet.

In 1790 M. Beugnot was elected at Bar-sur-Aube as syndic-attorney-general of that department, and in the month of September, 1791, he was elected to the Legislative Assembly. He sat in the ranks of the constitutional and loyalist party, and especially turned his attention to questions of finance.

M. Beugnot, who desired a sincere alliance of the ancient monarchical principle with the new liberties, could do nothing but lament the violent excesses that outraged the king's majesty every day, and even attacked the inviolability of the Legislative Assembly.

In the sitting of the 3rd of May, 1792, he mounted the tribune, and held up to public indignation that publication of the demagogues Marat and Carra, called *The People's Friend*.

"The first duty of the National Assembly," said he, "when a great public evil becomes manifest, is to carefully search out the cause, and to drain the source. You shuddered at what took place at Lille, and will shudder much more when I tell you that a bloodthirsty exhortation is being delivered to the people at your door; that a proposal to massacre your generals is there audaciously made. I hold the proofs of it in my hand. It is

a pamphlet signed "Marat," and here is a passage of it.

"'It is more than six months ago that I predicted that our generals, all faithful menials of the court, would betray the nation, that they would give up our frontiers. My hope is that the army will open its eyes, and feel that the first thing it has to do is to put its generals to death.'

"When crime raises its head so high, when every day the mind of the nation is being poisoned by bloodthirsty maxims, when here beneath your eyes, on the terrace of the Tuileries, the principles of a vile regicide are openly professed, how can order and confidence be re-established? I have heard them, these shouts of the factions, and have shuddered with horror at them. Cast your eyes on Lille, and you will see in practice this famous theory, which we ought to reproach ourselves for not having sooner repressed. These are the publications of Marat and Carra (some murmurs were raised at the two ends of the hall, but an almost universal shout came from the Assembly, Yes, yes, it is they); yes, I say these are the writers who have provoked all these disorders. If you wish to know who are the most mortal enemies of our country, here they are; these are the pretended friends of the people, who preach principles and distribute writings dripping with blood. How can you have an army, how can you have a government, when writers who dare to call themselves patriots devote the generals to death, the king to the scorn of the people, the representatives of the nation to its indignation, when several of us have been insulted without redress at the doors of this Chamber? It is time to know whether the disorder will cease, and to see which of the two powers must yield —that which is created to protect us, or that which tears us to pieces. The interests of the army and of the public

demand a severe example. The nation is not in the hands that impudently claim the title; it is composed of the citizens who have this morning come to bring you patriotic gifts, of peaceful workmen, of the citizens of all the departments who look to you with respect, and desire peace with the Constitution and by the Constitution (applause). It cannot be forgotten that there is a party of factious men to contend with, when they have begun already by threatening the representatives of the nation, and besides by carrying off prisoners no less inviolable. Let us fear to see dissolution extend to the ultimate elements of the social body, and the arrival of Prætorian bands in Paris to preserve us. No, rather let us take courage; it is now time for the punishment of such audacity; let seditious movements be repressed, and the incendiaries prosecuted. Let us contend with the army of crime; let us unite our efforts, and our first triumphs will secure the constitution. This horrible licentiousness of the press has determined many of our colleagues to carry their complaints to the Minister of Justice. I will not publish his answers here. I will submit to you the scheme of a decree to prevent there being need for any more to be made in future. I demand that the Minister of Justice should be directed in this very sitting to order the public accusers to prosecute the authors and distributors of writings that provoke disobedience to the law, as well as assaults and violence committed against public officers (Applause)."—*Moniteur* of May 4th, 1792.

The decree of accusation against Marat and Carra was agreed to almost unanimously, and a few days afterwards M. Beugnot was nominated Secretary of the Legislative Assembly. After the 10th of August, he very seldom appeared in the tribune. His attitude in the Assembly and his denunciation of Marat had marked

him for the vengeance of the party of terrorists. In the month of October, 1793, he was arrested and sent to prison. In the following chapters the author relates his captivity during the Reign of Terror.

I had been warned during the first days of October, 1793 (old style), that an order to arrest me had been issued. There was no middle course. The storm of blood that was soon to drown France began to lower. A swarm of barbarous men had sprung up, no one knew whence or how, and covered the Republic with spies, informers, administrators, judges, and executioners. There was no spot left where virtue could breathe in peace. Courage was depressed, minds were blighted, and looks downcast. Men feared to speak, to cast a look, to stop, or to listen; and in these hateful days Frenchmen might have lost memory and speech altogether, if it had been as easy to forget as to be silent. How could a proscribed man have found an asylum amid this consternation? Where could he pray for hospitality, when death was the wages of this time-honoured virtue? Obliged either to fly or to await the fetters prepared for me by the tyrant, I wished to decide after reflection, so that I might firmly adhere to my resolution. I had need of quiet and solitude. I walked to the Jardin des Plantes, and when I got there slowly climbed the labyrinth, comparing in my mind the motives for either decision. Reason counselled me to flight. I knew the men to whom my country was delivered by fate. I knew very well that they were too stupid to govern it; but I also knew that they were savage enough to try to devour it. The generous friend who had warned me of my fate, offered me nearly certain means of escape. I inclined to flight, and had come without noticing it to

the top of the labyrinth. Thence I mechanically cast a look on the magnificent city that was covered by the pall of tyranny. It was still lighted up by a fine day. From that height it seemed calm and surrounded by all means for happiness. I know not what emotion passed through my mind, but a crowd of subjects that I had hitherto regarded with indifference presented themselves to my thoughts in affecting forms. I considered them, and went over them; at length I could not distract myself from them. At the furthest point, I recalled the building that had been witness of my studies and my childhood's games; further on a dome excited the deepest feelings of my heart, and the remembrance of pleasures felt with delight; or some spot reproached me with errors to regret. In a word, the beautiful day, the river, the markets, and the green grass took away my reason, and elevated me into sentiment. The remembrance of my wife and daughter, and my old father, added to my agitation, and, as if I had feared to deliberate any more in their presence, I said to myself with a sigh, "No, no, I will not flee. Rather die a thousand times among them! Cowards, who always have the word country on your lips! Yes, there is a country, I felt it then. Yes, the country of a virtuous man is composed of all the experiences that nature has prepared for him, and that society warrants. There is a country for the good son, for the tender father, for the faithful husband, for the feeling and pious man; but there is none for crime, and you have never had one; your country, yours is a den!"

I came down from the labyrinth, pleased at having made up my mind. I felt as if I had left a heavy burden at the top. As I came down I tenderly greeted a number of objects that I had not even seen as I went up. I was no longer indifferent to anything. All the inanimate objects around me appeared like so many old

friends that I had been going to part with, and amid whom I was rejoiced to find myself. I prolonged my dream of sentiment till it was late. I was weak enough to go and visit the spots that had struck me most from the top of the labyrinth, and I repeated to each of them my protest against separation.

My resolution firmly taken, I went home calmly, and took precautions dictated by prudence. I confided my money to one man whom I thought trustworthy, my papers to another, and I poured into the bosom of a third a secret that weighed on my mind. Of these three confidants the first robbed me, the second appropriated my papers, and the third entirely betrayed me—and none of these things surprised me. A persecuted man is no longer a man—that is, he is, if possible, something worse. So it required an exertion of courage not to deny or outrage him, and it must be confessed, to the shame of humanity, that very few showed themselves capable of it.

A fortnight went by without my hearing anything, and—I confess my weakness—I began to hope. I had two years before had a violent scene with the titular tyrant, and Couthon, his invalid *Omar*, was my debtor; but on this last head he had so completely forgotten me, and the other seemed taken up with such vast considerations, that I reckoned on human weakness omitting some details, and modestly appropriated one of these details to myself. But my mistake did not last long.

On the 18th Vendémiaire, about nine o'clock in the morning, two unknown persons presented themselves at my study. From their mysterious ways, and tones of forced politeness, I understood the object of their mission. One mentioned his own name—it was the inspector of police. The other stammered a few confused words informing me of his. I did not entirely comprehend the language he spoke, but something low and sinister in his

face and person formed a commentary on his speech, and I understood that this second individual was one of those licensed brigands then known by the name of the revolutionary committee. I asked the inspector to show me his order. He unrolled a very dirty list, containing perhaps twenty names, and modestly requested me to find my own. I went over the list, and answered what was quite true, that I did not recognise my name in it, and that he must have made a mistake. The inspector hesitated, and seemed to have decided on retiring. On reflection he proposed to the member of the committee to go to the police office and ask whether there was not an order of arrest out against me. He gave him as credentials a pencil note, in which he mutilated my name and condition. The member of committee accepted the message, departed, and left me alone with the inspector of police, who did not cease to declare that he must have made a mistake, and yet told me with silly candour that Robespierre's following was at my door, that is to say, that the avenues of my rooms, the house, and the street were crowded with ragged bravoes.

I answered by some observations on the carelessness of his proceedings, and the conversation increased in warmth, when my friend, casting a look into the garden, told me in a dry tone that we should soon know what to believe, for he saw a gendarme running up. He then left me hastily, in order to go and meet the new-comer, and conversed with him some time in the ante-room. Probably he told him that I was not respectful to the executors of arbitrary orders; for I can only attribute to a strong prejudice, based on a still stronger breakfast, the stupid and barbarous manner in which this gendarme treated me. He entered my room with his sword drawn, and after cursing for some minutes, asked where I was, and who I was. The inspector pointed me out to his haggard eyes,

glowing with anger and moist with brandy. "It is he, indeed," he cried. "I know him. Here he is! I have been looking for him for a fortnight, without being able to find him. His business is settled. To the Conciergerie with him, hands and feet bound; here is game for the guillotine." And my friend marched fiercely about my room, cutting right and left in the air with his sword, vociferating the proverbs of Father Duchesne, and making occasional applications of them to me, such as made the honourable audience equally merry. I coolly waited till his lungs should no longer respond to the efforts of his memory. The moment came; I made use of it to ask for the warrant of arrest. The gendarme refused, and returned to his favourite *refrain* of tying my hands and feet. I insisted; the inspector supported me; and at last I so far prevailed as to obtain the reading of a warrant signed Soules and Marino, that did indeed despatch me direct to the Conciergerie. The sound of this death-warrant restored all my courage, and I showed myself like a man who has no more than a few days to live. I raised my voice and asked which was the civil officer, the man representing law? No one answered. "Well," said I to the member of the revolutionary committee, "as you do not know, I inform you that it is yourself, you who have just performed the work of an officious servant, that are the legal officer here. By that title I now summon you to relieve me of that impertinent fellow, who, to your shame, has been abusing me this half hour. His place is not here, it is at my door, to await your orders in case I oppose any resistance, and you have an infallible pledge of my submission; namely, that you are twenty to one." Then I insisted on being brought before some constituted authority, for I declared that I did not recognise myself in the warrant they had just read. "Take care what you are about, the matter is no common

arrest, but to clear up whether I am, or am not, a state criminal." My three men were discomposed at this harangue, forcibly uttered, and especially at the word state criminal. The gendarme, who two minutes before was sending me to the guillotine without ceremony, fixed a stupid look on me, like a precious object that he saw for the first time. He seemed to be saying to himself,—So this is what a state criminal is made of. The inspector of police protested he would take nothing on himself, and the member of committee, folding his arms, raised his eyes to the ceiling in token of embarrassment. They sent him to the section office again. He went, and came back with these distinct orders, "There is nothing to do but to put on the seals and bring along the citizen." "What," said I, "shall I not have a hearing?" "No, citizen." "But what an atrocious violation of all reason and humanity! Have they posted up the Rights of Man at all the street corners, only to tear them up with greater convenience?" "Citizen, that has nothing to do with it." "Well, since that has nothing to do with it, I was wrong. So put on the seals, and take me away. Your business is to do as you like with men; you are right."

The doors of my rooms were closed, sealed up, and so were the windows; my time had come. The gendarme, who had become careful of me since he knew that I was a state criminal, and had heard my proposal that he should be turned out of the room, observed that I had taken no parcel. "Why should I take a parcel?" said I to him; "do you think I shall remain long where I am going?" "Citizen, your business will last six weeks or two months." "And what reason have you for so judging?" "I heard what you said just now; is not your business like that of Custine?" "Not altogether," answered I, with a smile, "but the end of it may be very like." A new difficulty; the seal had been

put on my wardrobe. The question was whether it could be removed. My men took counsel whether they had a right to do so. My patience failed. I went up to a seal and tore it off. "Now, gentlemen," I said to them, "the question is resolved; give me some linen, and let us make an end of it."

They were in haste to satisfy me. Emboldened by this first success, I asked if I might take some books. They answered yes, provided they knew what books they were. "I will take," said I to them, "if you have no suspicions of them, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Thomas à Kempis." These three authors passed without difficulty, and by favour of their obscurity. But chancing to take up Tasso, I was awkward enough to call it by the title of the book rather than by the name of the writer. I went on, "Do you allow me to add *Jerusalem Delivered*." The inspector gravely replied, "That one cannot be permitted." I did not perceive what quarrel Tasso could have with the capturers of the year II. of the Republic, and therefore persisted. The gendarme came up to me, and laying his hand on my shoulder as a mark of interest, said in a low voice, "Citizen, believe me; look you here, at this moment anything from Jerusalem is in bad odour." I replied to the rascal, "You are right; let us be gone."

We got into a hired carriage that my clever gendarme had taken care to call. We were surrounded by pikemen, who quarrelled for the seats in the carriage, or on the coachman's box. This emulation in baseness made me indignant. I spoke out about it, and persuaded them to reduce the escort to five, and thus I made malcontents. About noon I arrived at my destination. The steps leading up to the law-courts were full of women, as if seated in an amphitheatre awaiting a favourite exhibition. Indeed the death-cart was at the

door, awaiting the two unfortunates who were destined that day for prey of the wild beasts. When I alighted from the carriage, the whole amphitheatre rose and gave a long shout of delight. They clapped their hands, they stamped their feet, and laughed convulsively, expressing their fierce cannibal joy at the arrival of fresh prey. The short space that I passed on foot was long enough for me to be covered all over with filth showered on me from every side, and I could judge of the reception that awaited my exit by that which hailed me on entrance.

The wicket was a harbour of safety for the moment, and I was not sorry to see it open. So I was swallowed up in the vast antechamber of death, still called the Conciergerie. I crossed a kind of lantern, and reached a room on the left, where the prison office was. The chamber is divided by an open partition. The jailer's arm-chair, his desk, and registers are placed in the portion looking towards the yard of the law-courts, and in this place, a fresh comer is received and enrolled, with his description. The other portion is intended for the reception of the condemned during those endless hours intervening between condemnation and execution. The new-comer could see and speak to them if bold enough, and the slight barrier that intervened seemed like an emblematic warning that there was but one step between him and the scaffold. On the day that I entered, two men were awaiting the summons of the executioner. Their coats were off, their hair untied, and their necks prepared. Their countenances betrayed no emotion. Whether intentionally or otherwise, they held their hands in the position in which they would be tied, and made attempts at fierce and disdainful attitudes. They cast looks of scorn on all who approached, and I judged, from some words that occasionally escaped them, that they were not unworthy of their fate. A kind of muni-

cipal officer had the impudence to address to them some words of consolation, and ask them if they knew the name of the president who had sentenced them. "No," answered one of the condemned. "Pray do not tell it. I should be sorry to bear the name of such a wretch to the grave with me." The second said in a softer tone, "I earnestly hope that the president is not a Frenchman." Unfortunate men! Still loving your country! I reverence your memory for this heroic love and noble hope. You were right. These monsters, to whom nature gives birth in a moment of madness, belong to no country. He who delivered you over to death was born among us, but France, torn by his impious hands, would be indignant at his being termed a child of hers. What a scene did the place present where these unfortunate persons awaited their last hour! Mattresses laid on the floor showed that they had been there since last evening, and had already passed through the long torment of that night. The remains of their last meal stood near, their coats were thrown aside, and two candles that they had forgotten to extinguish were struggling with daylight to enhance the funereal gloom of the scene. I was examining in detail the horrors of this living sepulchre, when the door was noisily opened. I saw the gendarmes, the jailer, and executioners appear. I could look no more. I felt a sudden pang; it seemed as if my blood had frozen in my heart, and I fell on a bench in the office, haunted by this apparatus of death.

The clerk had been taken up by the departure of the two sufferers, and we were four new arrivals awaiting our destination. I remained on my bench, buried in a melancholy reverie. It was not for some time, and after having been jostled against him more than once, that I perceived among the new-comers a dandy who had not abated a morsel of the impertinence of his

manners. His dress, his curled hair, his boots, bore witness to his respect for the absurdities most in fashion. He misused a very narrow space by negligently pacing to and fro, treading on his neighbours' toes, pouring out a flood of excuses, repeating the acts, and humming an Italian air all the time. Even in the crush-room of the opera he would have been remarkable for his affectation of the excess of folly. His name was a good deal like mine, and was the only thing we had in common. He was arrested for a forgery of assignats, and I as a measure of public security. The clerk, who was generally a very exact person, made a mistake, for perhaps the first time in his life. He applied the warrant by which I was taken to the airy figure of the dandy, and presented me with his. In fairness, however, I must allow that my gloomy and miserable appearance contributed to the error. We were divided among the jailers, who led the dandy to the chamber I ought to have occupied, in the division of the prison called the infirmary, and I went to take his place in a dungeon that was still, as I should fancy, under the intercession of Saint Charles.*

This dungeon was fifteen feet square, and light enough to disclose its hideousness was only admitted through a hole made in the door. I found two companions there. One, who was accused of murdering his mother, was a man about forty. Whether it were prejudice or reality, I thought I never had met a face with crime more legibly written on it. He had a leaden complexion, squinting eyes, and a distorted mouth. His eyebrows contracted when he wished to observe anything, and his lips were always trembling with a convulsive motion which gave a horrible and threatening expression to the whole of his features. He spoke little, his manners

* St. Charles Borromeo, patron in time of Pestilence. (Query, ED.)

were rough, and he was angry with everything around him. The wretch seemed at variance with all nature, even with himself. It was a remarkable coincidence, that he suffered death on the very same day on which I was restored to life and liberty; and this became another cause for thankfulness to and adoration of Eternal Providence, which sometimes deigns to overrule human justice.

My other companion was a young man of twenty to twenty-five years old. I fear that from early years he had filled a place in the higher ranks of the band of thieves that permanently infest the capital. His pleasant and open countenance formed a perfect contrast to that of the assassin. He had a kind of politeness in his prison manners which contrasted most favourably with the constant surliness of the other. He received me pleasantly, deplored our common fate in very good language; and as we are always inclined to some exaggeration when we conceive a favourable opinion of one another, I was persuaded that he was a political prisoner like myself.

I finished the day without communication with my comrades. I answered very shortly any questions they put to me, most frequently I did not answer at all. By night I had a violent attack of fever. My thoughts were aimless and confused. I dreamed with my eyes open, and my wandering fancy happily absorbed my reason. The only very distinct sensation that I felt was a want, and that was thirst. I drank water to excess. This diet did not suit me. I passed a painful night. Next day I lay on the straw exhausted, and faint from the effects of the night. The fancies I formed were quite unconnected; one alone predominated over all the others, namely, that I was destined to die. I went no farther, and had no strength to be alarmed, or even concerned as to the time and manner.

My young comrade took pity on me. He became

pressing, even importunate; but with such grace that he managed to restore me, even against my will. From the evening of the second day, a sort of confidence grew up between us. I was in the bosom of Paris like a traveller lost in the midst of a desert; a vast abyss separated me from the rest of the world, and in such a condition the meeting with a fellow-creature is a boon from heaven; there is no possibility of remaining indifferent to him. So I talked to my companion. He learned my secret, which was no secret at all. His embarrassment betrayed him as he was just going to explain his own. Some incautious questions that he put to me about the proceedings by jury made me completely understand with whom I had to deal, and I was pained to have to diminish the esteem with which I was so glad to regard him. I spent the night quietly enough; nature resumed her rights, and I slept. But how dearly did I pay for this passing annihilation when it was necessary to issue from it! No, I know nothing so painful as the moment of awaking in the midst of a dungeon where the most horrible dream is less horrible than the reality. When once awakened, one prays, one endeavours to dream again. Sensibility struggles against the senses which are obstinately reconstructing around you the instruments of torture; it is always as if you saw them for the first time. Every day at the moment of awaking despair launched a dart through my mind, and when latterly I could have disposed of my own fate I have been a hundred times tempted to make use of the means I possessed of putting myself to sleep so as never to awake again.

The third day passed with less embarrassment; now we had all found our place. The assassin remained in his corner, a prey to his savage temper. The young man continued the same care for me, and did not cease to

wonder at their having placed us both in such rigorous confinement, for he pretended that he had only been arrested for a police matter, and confounded his business and mine together without ceremony. Towards the evening of this day the jailers came to pay their usual visit. The young man pleaded the cause of both of us with warmth and even adroitness. He adduced me as an example of an unheard-of persecution, and insisted that I should die in the dungeon if they left me there two days more. The turnkey cut short his arguments with laconic brutality, but he chose to look at my face, so as to know the individual who had excited so great an interest, and he even asked me some questions. He inquired the cause of my arrest. I told him it was a measure of the Committee of Public Safety. He, likewise, was surprised at finding me there, and wanted to know the reason; I told him I did not know. He asked what I had been doing during the Revolution, and I detailed it in a few words; my name—I told him. "I would bet," said the jailer, "that this is the Minister of the Interior's man. Wait a bit, I will finish shutting up, and come back."

This expression, "the Minister of the Interior's man," put me off the scent. I could not think how I could be the man of Citoyen Parey, whom I had never spoken to in my life; but, on the other hand, for three days past I need not have been surprised at anything. I was in this perplexity when the jailer returned, told me to follow him, and boasted of his skill in discovering me buried there.

I proceeded to prepare to obey him, but I wished first to express my gratitude to my companion in the dungeon. The jailer opposed this, saying that he was a rogue who had robbed me. I protested the contrary. The jailer persisted, and told me to look over my property. I did so, and found everything that I had brought in correct. The jailer did not see that he was defeated; he declared it

was impossible but that I must have been robbed, thundered again, and threatened that he would return armed with a terrible weapon if all that had been taken from me were not instantly restored. I prayed and begged; I hardly persuaded him not to tear my poor companions to pieces, because they ought to have robbed me, even though they had really done no such thing.

On the way I asked the jailer what he meant by saying that I was the "Minister of the Interior's man." He told me I should learn at the office. Indeed, the clerk of the prison showed me a note he had received from Citoyen Grandpré, first clerk in the Home Office, who had requested him to do as much for me as the rules would permit, and to get me anything I might want. I also learnt that, on receipt of this note, they had made search in the rooms without success, and that the continual changes in the prison had caused both my person and the search to be forgotten the next day. I afterwards found myself at La Force, with Citoyen Grandpré, whose crime consisted of having wished to make the benefits of the Revolution of the 9th Thermidor penetrate into the prisons by the 11th or 12th. Barrère gave him this little lesson in politics, by the way, but happily it was not long, and I regretted that I did not learn till after he had left La Force, that it was to him that I was obliged for having been removed from the dungeon at the Conciergerie.

The protection of Citoyen Grandpré, and still more my pale and dejected face, obtained for me a place in the infirmary, which was lauded to me as a privileged place. Now this infirmary really was the most horrible hospital that existed in the world. The building is twenty-five feet wide by a hundred long, closed at the two ends by iron gratings and covered by a lofty vault. It was built of cut stone, paved with long flags, and besides, as its

architecture was of the heaviest of this horrible style, it might have been supposed to have been hewn out of a rock. The stone is begrimed with a dark tint by the smoke of charcoal and of the lamps. The light only entered by two shaded windows, very narrow, and set within the arches of the vault, so that nothing could be more like the infernal palaces as seen at the Opera. Probably the architect went thither for his model. From forty to fifty beds lined the walls of this long narrow room, and on these beds might be seen cast, two and two, and often three and three, poor wretches suffering under different maladies. It was impossible to renew the air there, there was not even a thought of purifying it, any more than of changing the straw of the beds or cleaning their covers; so that an unfortunate person brought thither was suddenly enveloped in a whirlwind of miasma and corruption. The corruption was such that it sprouted on the flags of the floor, and in the driest weather no one could go through the infirmary dry-shod. To make matters worse, the conveniences of this part of the prison were placed in the middle of the infirmary, without means of separation, and as they were not enough for the large number, the environs were likewise used, and these environs were the infirmary itself! Besides, there was no place where they treated humanity so barbarously and disgustingly. I often found among the conveniences sick persons lying on the pavement and covered with filth, who had endeavoured to drag themselves thither and fell from weakness and pain. They would have died if their companions in misfortune had not dragged them out. I could multiply these hideous pictures. If a sick person died, they just pulled a bit of the coverlet common to him and his neighbour over his head, while the latter, undoubtedly the more wretched of the two, lay freezing with cold while waiting to have the

body removed. There was a regular hour for that, and, besides, they would not have put themselves to the expense of transport for only a single corpse—the contingent for a journey was three or four. Above all these scourges was one greater still; a doctor, a fierce and barbarous wretch, the only person who could make a sick man feel that he himself was not the most degraded being in the world. Never did a word of consolation pass his lips; he never gave a sign of pity to suffering and tortured humanity. His daily visit generally lasted eighteen minutes—sometimes twenty, or twenty-two,—never was longer than twenty-five. I restrained my anger to count that in twenty-two minutes he had seen forty sick, giving a trifle more than half a minute to each person. His most common prescription was a decoction, a decoction for all, and never anything else. His carelessness in this point at least acted as a slight preservative against the effects of his ignorance, and perhaps the sick were the gainers. What was said of him in the Almanac of Prisons was literally true. It is positively the case that more than once a sick man was placed in the same bed where another had died the evening before without this cruel Sangrado's knowing anything about it; and still supposing it was the same patient, he saw no reason for changing his treatment, and prescribed the continuance of the tisane. Well, this is all explicable; the doctor was very rich, he had held an important post in the times gone by; he had been among the happy of the earth, he had contracted prejudices from them, arrogance and insolence. Such a man was quite out of place in a prison infirmary. Yes, Doctor Thierry, you were very much out of place! I know you; you wanted great palaces, riches, men cooks, and you only found the wretched there. Then you were too old to learn, and too hardened to feel that

the unfortunate is a sacred object; that your art—the most beautiful of all arts—is sublime when employed in his behalf, and that it was for the persevering and courageous application of their knowledge to distress that the physicians of antiquity merited the title of demi-gods. So console yourself, I can very well suppose that you could prepare some grandee for the Pantheon, if he were foolish enough to take your prescriptions; but I warrant that you will never have a place there.

At sight of this refuge of all the horrors and pains that could afflict the human species, I cursed the protection of Citoyen Grandpré, and I regretted my dungeon. I calculated how many stages of misery society produces that men of the ordinary lot are born, live, and die without even an idea of; and I perceived why the philosopher of Geneva regretted the woods, and why he had met so many fine minds sincerely determined to make him out a madman. So I was in preparation of a commentary on Hobbes, when a companion in misfortune came to distract me from my meditations. This happily-constituted individual had preserved his coolness, his originality, and even a kind of cheerfulness, in the midst of the infirmary. He complimented me on my arrival in the infirmary—which he had the goodness to call the most quiet and convenient room in the prison. So people may judge of the rest. My advocate said to me, "You are not very ill; if you like we will be partners at bed and board; I have cleanliness and good living, and we shall suit each other very well." However, he wanted to know, above all, if I was a Revolutionist, and why I had been apprehended. I satisfied him on these two heads, and then he commenced the recital of his own adventures. His family was well known in Anjou. As for himself, he had been modestly contented with the profession of an advocate, because he had a taste for litera-

ture and independence. He had composed some writings that had made some noise in his province, and was naturally surprised that they had never reached me. The Revolution had deprived him of the consideration of his fellow-citizens; he had been jostled by new men and new institutions; the old man's bile was raised, and, in a fit of anger, he had composed a dialogue between the nation and Henry IV. The King spoke first, and spoke loud, and even in a disrespectful manner, to the nation. The author had gone thus far, and the nation had not said anything, when a Revolutionary Committee had surprised my advocate from Anjou and his dialogue, and had sent them, packed up, by the same coach to the Revolutionary Tribunal.

I did all I could to defend and excuse myself, but I was obliged that very evening to endure the reading of the dialogue and give my advice. It was impossible for me to conceal that I thought Henry IV. spoke with royal insolence. "So much the better," said my advocate to me; "indeed, so much the better. I expected you to say so. What a proof that I have preserved the truth of history; for this Henry IV. was a rough sort of gallant. You can see him with his plume, his long sword and moustache, you remember his harangue to the assembly at Rouen, and I ask your opinion, could I do otherwise?" I told him, "You might have done better." "And how, if you please?" "You might have made him not speak at all. If you had useful truths to reveal, why did not you choose some other organ? You know we do not want any more kings, nor plumes, nor moustaches." "All in good time," replied my advocate; "but the thing is done. Well, since I have been in here I have made the nation reply, and, upon my word, I find that the speech does not fall short of the other. You can judge of it for yourself." I asked a respite from that till the next

morning, to my advocate's great regret, as he declared that his work was one of those that must be read straight through by any one who wanted to see all the merit of it.

The sliding of bolts, the noise of keys, and the barking of dogs proclaimed night. My advocate wanted me to share his bed. I dreaded the intimacy of the chancellor of Henry IV. I prepared to pass the night on a bench placed around the stove, between an officer of the merchant navy, who had made a leap from the East Indies to the Conciergerie, and a tailor of Paris, who had made his way there from the Rue Mouffetard. Thus this tyranny, the most powerful and hideous that has ever laid waste the human race, struck in opposite hemispheres at the same moment while it preyed on everything around. It passed over space, and rushed to the four corners of the world to seize its victims. Prodigious scourge, its birth, its progress, and fall will long weary human reflection. The marine officer, more accustomed than others to bad beds, slept very well on the bench; the tailor went to sleep, telling me that he was in the Conciergerie for having made the sleeves of the hussars' jackets too short, and notwithstanding the interest of the subject he failed in sending me to sleep. So there I was alone awake, in the midst of the infirmary of the Conciergerie.

I am wrong; pain kept several of the poor wretches sleepless on their pallets. Then I felt all the depth of the verse of Colardeau—

How lengthy seems the night to wakeful pain

I heard plaintive cries and groans around me. In the distance a wretch, haunted by a terrible dream, would utter shrieks that froze my blood with terror. I could distinguish plainly enough the words blood, executioner, death; these words floated round these funereal couches, and from hour to hour brazen clocks meted out this

eternity of sorrow by its tardy strokes. The dogs answered the clock by long howls. And you who have not spent a night there, in the midst of this assemblage of horrors, you have neither had any real experience nor suffering in this world. As an addition to the misery, a staircase that leads to one of the courts of the Palace of Justice is attached to the infirmary wall. This staircase must lead to one of the halls of the Revolutionary Tribunal; for by five o'clock in the morning all the sick who could sleep were awakened with a start by the noise of the amateurs hurrying and fighting for the front places, and this clatter, terrifying for more than one reason, was renewed daily and prolonged some time into the morning. So the first feeling of a sick man awaking was the fear that they were fighting over his head for the pleasure of battening upon his last moments; for henceforward—that is to say from the first days of Brumaire, illness, even extremity itself, was no dispensation from the necessity of appearing before the tribunal; and I saw carried thither a priest of Autun who was not supposed to have twelve hours to live, and who really died the very moment he was thrown into the tumbril. In presence of so much and such profound misery I blushed at being born a man. Despair pierced my soul; my eyes were dry and blood burning. I wandered through the infirmary with hasty steps, at once awaiting and dreading the light that began to penetrate through the bars. Pursued by the images of the night, uneasy as to what might await me by day, had I been then called to execution I could have flown with transport. I more than once made this reflection, that death on the scaffold only causes horror to the generality of men, because they compare it with a state of peace, of enjoyment, and perhaps of happiness that they are experiencing; but death considered from the depths of a dungeon, or what is worse,

from one of the beds I speak of—death when the whole existence is changed into torture—is no longer the height of evils but their remedy. The courage of the greater part of those who perished in these later times really consisted of great satisfaction at arriving at the end of their sufferings. Biron said to me, "These people have been wearying me too long; they are going to cut off my head, but at least there will be an end of this."

The infirmary had no sooner received the feeble portion of light that was its due than my advocate came obligingly to inquire how I had passed the night. I was a thousand miles away from his adventures or his Henry IV., and gave him a sorry welcome. He attributed my ill-humour to the fatigue I had experienced, and scolded me for having disdained his advice, and spending the night on a bench by the stove. In his opinion it was bad enough to kill me. "There would be no great harm if I had succeeded," I bitterly replied; and thereupon my man read me a very fine sermon on patience, and worked round to his favourite point the second part of his dialogue. "You have prepared me very well," said I; "let us see." He read the reply of the nation to Henry IV. Here the good man was going astray. The nation spoke like a trollop. It answered like one crazy with abuse, and mere abuse. I showed him this, and called his attention to the fact that no one would attend to it; that in the first part he had worked with spirit, and his muse was felt to be in her element, while in this it was with an effort that he assumed a character, and he stumbled at every step. The old man perceived that there was some truth in my view. I seemed pleased with his opinion, and unintentionally flattered his foible; and he conceived a favourable idea of me, and kept it to the last. Some time afterwards, the day before his death, for such was the

reward of the poor author, he set his affairs in order; he entrusted his domestic arrangements to General Marcé, and made me the depositary of his literary productions, to be published or suppressed as I pleased. I did not fail to take advantage of the alternative.

I have mentioned that the infirmary was burthened with an insupportable service to the dwellers in that part of the prison. I passed them all in review that morning, and recognised a good many of our comrades. The chief part greeted me with consolatory interest. I speedily left the infirmary through their solicitude, and was admitted into a small room called the little surgery. As this chamber was intended to receive a famous woman, it had in addition to all the rest a double door five inches thick, bound with iron and furnished with three enormous locks. Of the two windows that had previously lighted it one was hermetically closed, the other almost entirely; but by way of amends it was hung with a paper that multiplied around us the emblems and words Liberty, Equality, Rights of Man, Constitution: it was impossible to raise one's eyes without encountering the word Liberty, or bars, or that of Equality and bolts. This chamber, intended for an uncommon purpose, was now occupied by the national representation; that is to say, its inmates all were or had been deputies. The trial of the twenty-one deputies was coming to a conclusion. An object of more lofty interest soon made a diversion from all I had so far felt, thought, and experienced. I had before my eyes the struggle of talent and knowledge, of all that men are accustomed to cherish and honour, but of talent and knowledge loaded with unworthy fetters, against ignorance in favour, wickedness in action, and crime all-powerful. An eloquent writer has already excited the curiosity of the public about the last moments of these celebrated men. I will be careful not to repeat details

so truly and interestingly given by his pen. Reverence for the pictures of ancient masters must be proved by abstaining from touching them. Their cause is still being tried by both France and Europe at large; but posterity, that judge without appeal, is coming forward to decide it. Already it is recognised that the word federalism is a moral monster, sprung from the head of a fanatic wretch, even as the hideous figure that represents it, is the fruit of the brain of a tasteless workman; and that the one has no more existed in politics than the other in reality. Already has the Convention yielded to the return of some reason, by ordering the demolition of all those ridiculous monuments that tyranny had spread over the soil of the Republic, in order to give existence to this federalism from which it derived so much of its strength. Thus we must seek elsewhere the motives for the fall of the first Frenchman immolated to this sanguinary chimera, of those who were the first to denounce the reign of the Marats, the Robespierres, and all those wretches,—the disgrace of humanity, nature, and the shame of the nation.

I watched them loaded with the same fetters as myself —these men whose ability I had so often admired, whom I had lately seen at the highest point of power and credit, and who had crushed me, as well as many others, by the weight of their unbounded popularity. What reflections were inspired within me by this spectacle! I had said to one of them, "The Revolution is death. It pitilessly breaks whatever it encounters. Neither age nor reputation, nor credit, nor virtue, nor wealth, is any protection from its blows." Posterity will anxiously inquire what strange concurrence of circumstances could have hurried these founders of the Revolution to the scaffold. The time for comparison is not yet come, but even now can it be said that the party of the Girondists has indeed fur-

nished orators, metaphysicians, distinguished writers, but not a single statesman? The chief part of them, bred up in the rules of the old bar, had contracted an absurd faith in the powers of oratory, and persuaded themselves that they had killed their enemies with a well-pointed sarcasm or a pompous discourse. Those were the principal instruments. They did but prick the tiger when his mouth was gaping to devour them. Besides, they had given a handle against themselves by not vigorously following up an idea that was forcible and ingenious enough in itself. The party of the Girondists had pursued a tortuous course in the Legislative Assembly. Alternately the friends or enemies of the court, as it committed or withdrew the reigns of government from them, they were still negotiating with it even to a short time before the 10th of August. On that very day at seven o'clock in the morning the Gironde had not determined on its course; it was not till two hours later, when the victory of the popular party was decided, that it came forth at the head of this party. When the day was over the Girondists believed that the results would be glorious, and wished to claim the glory of them in the eyes of France. They were not so well contented with the proceedings that had accompanied or followed the events of this day, and endeavoured to cast the blame on the real authors of the deeds of the 10th of August. I repeat this was a clever idea, and besides they omitted nothing that could conduce to its success. Roland employed all the energy of his virtue, and, what was more important, all his wife's ability against Danton, against the Commune, against the marauders of the châteaux; Brissot composed diatribes against the Jacobins; Vergniaud, Gaudet, and Gensonné pressed the motion on the Assembly. It was a contest who should most rejoice over the 10th of August,—who should most successfully claim the honour, and most

abuse the true originators of that day's proceedings. The opposite party felt all the cruelty and insult towards themselves of the proceedings of the Girondists, and were enraged by it. They multiplied horrors in the midst of the capital, and to disgust the Girondists with the 10th of August, did not fail to confound the massacres of September with that day's work. These massacres, of shameful and lamentable memory, offered a great opportunity to the Girondists of carrying their line of action as far as they pleased. They had almost declared that they would prosecute the authors of them in the face of all Europe. They had the command of the civil service through Roland, of the army through the generals. The majority of the Convention came full of indignation against the executioners of September. They might have reconquered the municipality if they would have left Pétion in the post of mayor. It is only difficult to enumerate the quantity of opportunities then at their disposal. What did they do with all these opportunities? They lost three months in contending with Marat, and composing some kind of metaphysical allegory under the name of Constitution, no longer remembered,—indeed, which was forgotten a week after its appearance. But a month or a day is an age in a Revolution. The opposite side manœuvred during the first months of the Constitution; but when they saw that the Girondists had let chance slip by, they caught them in their own snare. They accepted all the reproaches cast on them, avowed the excesses the others had not known how to punish, and placed them under the protection of increasing popularity. Weary of acting on the defensive, they made an attack in their turn. Strengthened by all the wretches whose hopes lay with them, they turned out Roland as an inconvenient dotard, exalted Marat as a just man under persecution, filled the offices with his creatures, named

ministers of his selection, and when at last he came to the plenitude of his power he overthrew the Girondists for having had the presumption to be his rivals in glory and power, but not in crime.

Besides, this party had an advantage over the Girondists in coalescing in principle, or in absence of principle, better and much more quickly with the desires of the maddened and unrestrained populace. Permanent anarchy under the name of Liberty, invasion of property under that of Equality, assassinations, executions, thefts held sacred as means of regeneration, all vices of repute; the names of virtue and honour had become ridiculous or dangerous; such was the doctrine or instinct of this party; and they were likely to find, and really did find, a frightful number of followers among a people corrupted by a long period of slavery. After the dreadful shock of the Revolution, when all the springs of social order had been shattered by the convulsion, such doctrines were more in favour than the hotch-potch of Condorcet, the diatribes and apologues of Brissot, or the sophisms of Gaudet. The sans-culottes did not understand a word of the meaning of these gentlemen; but they understood Marat very well when he advised them to hang the pastrycooks, so as to plunder their shops at their ease; or Danton, when he granted them forty sous each for every sitting of their section; or Barrère himself, when he promised them the wealth of the aristocrats; — in short, these men distributed things worth having, patents of appointment to municipal and government offices, for thieves, assassins, commissaries, guards, all inviolable. The sans-culottes perceived their sovereignty by these marks; but they only saw the words in the productions of the Girondists, whose meaning, expressions, and intentions were equally problematic to them. So France was compelled, by the force of circumstances,

and by the feebleness of those men who could neither foresee nor direct them, to experience every stage of misfortune, until these cruel but salutary lessons had penetrated to the illusions of the lowest class of society, and had taught them that for them, as for others, and perhaps even more than for others, welfare can only be obtained by moderation, and happiness by control.

But a vast number of men were to perish before the extremity of misery had undeceived all minds, and those men, above all, who, being placed at the head of affairs, offered some resistance to the torrent, and next those who, cast into the midst of this society, by their very presence were a standing remonstrance against this outburst of folly and wickedness. Doubtless, to be at all remarkable either for integrity, knowledge, or wealth, was a death-brand in the eyes of the followers of Marat; and if that party made a mistake it was not in loudly publishing its reasons for proscription, but in concealing them under contradictory or ridiculous forms. If they had thrown away the mask instead of only putting it on, if they had proceeded as decided partisans, the sworn foes of virtuous, learned, or wealthy men in the Republic, if they had audaciously weeded France in this manner, instead of mowing it without foresight or method, they would have destroyed with impunity the very traces of civilisation and organised in the midst of Europe the most dangerous horde of barbarians that has ever terrified the world.

We have seen how they began with the deputies who were most in their way; that is to say, those who composed the party of the opposition, who defended virtue beneath the daggers of crime, property beneath the pikes of covetousness, and liberty beneath the sword of tyrants.

Seven of these deputies were in the same room with

Lamourette and me. On the day that sentence was given we were left alone. We were far from fathoming the depth of this horrible plot, for we retained some hopes. We knew well that the chief part of the deputies would not escape the powerful hatred they had aroused, but we could not imagine what object there could be in making victims of Ducos and Fonfrède, who had never vigorously adopted these principles, and were both endowed with a sweetness of manner, a frankness, and an amiability that are everywhere charming in society, and nowhere fall under the suspicions of Government. We also made an exception in favour of Fauchet, the Republican Fauchet, who could not even be reproached with Federalism, for he had opposed with all his power the meeting at Calvados, especially when he knew that Wimphen was the military head of it. Lastly, we were unable to conceive that they could think that miserable Boileau, of Yonne, was not a Jacobin, as he disgraced his fetters by complaints, tears, and regrets for having been present at the "commission des douze," and by his protestations that he was a friend of Robespierre's, and a worthy member of the Mountain.

On the 2nd of November, about two o'clock in the morning, we heard our room-door noisily opened. Three jailers with torches hastily entered. They made an inventory of our comrades' little furniture, and made preparations for taking it away. We asked them if sentence was given. They said no, but that they would not return to the prison any more, whatever might be the result of the trial, and that the removal of the property from the room was customary. The time at which this removal was made was a sad commentary on the jailer's speech, but it is difficult to cease to hope for what is eagerly desired. We continually endeavoured to assuage our grief at the loss of the others by flattering ourselves that

Ducos, Fonfrède, and Fauchet, would escape. Indeed, our hope for the latter was increased when about seven o'clock he sent for his breviary, as the jailers had omitted it in their inventory. We supposed that in their last moments some of the victims had been affected by some recollection of their religion, and that Fauchet remained with them to console them. We were wrong. Fauchet shared the honoured fate of his colleagues, and wished to dedicate his last moments to the performance of one of the duties of his order. Philosophers like Hebert and Chaumette will give a compassionate smile to the last hours of the Bishop of Calvados; true philosophers will not be in haste to judge. Fauchet was born with an ardent spirit, an imagination rising even to enthusiasm, a taste for the marvellous, and, as a result of this organisation, a decided leaning to credulity. Brought up in the Catholic faith, and trained in its schools, his mind was early fostered amid prophecies, miracles, and presentiments. Destined to be a preacher of this religion, he was attached to it by inclination, and as it is not easy to stop short in such a course, he had very nearly become a prophet himself. The Bishopric of Calvados had weaned him from the dreams of the social club, and he had ended by being a priest in thorough earnest. At a moment when men neither desire nor require to dissemble, he proclaimed his firm belief and kept his conduct in accordance with his principles. He protested strongly against the appearances to the contrary which some portions of his life had presented, and he took pains to persuade us that he was blameless on the point on which the public usually most accused him. Every day he devoutly recited his breviary, read the Holy Scriptures, and a chapter of the Imitation of Christ. The book of Holy Scripture that he was most inclined to was the Apocalypse. He maintained that it was the French Revolution itself that St. John had seen

in the isle of Patmos, but allowed that, until the taking of the Bastille, it had not been easy to understand it. But after that the explanation was perfectly plain. In the Apocalypse Fauchet found the birth, progress, and triumphs of the Jacobins, the reign of Robespierre, the noyades of Carrier, the fusillades of Collot, and even the Jacobinical violence of Barère. He often drew parallels so striking and developed them with so much eloquence, that he excited the cold materialist Gensonné, and amazed Brissot. Besides, the latter, of whom everything has been said except the truth, had also his own sort of credulity. He was an old child, always ready to be deceived, and quite incapable of deceiving others. If ever a wrong sense was given to a word, it is that which the public have applied to the word *brissoter*. This deputy had much ability and equal imprudence; he knew history perfectly, and man very little, easily embraced an extended circle of political relations, and could not see beyond the end of his nose. Very desirous of showing that he was right, he did not know how to be so in reality. In a word, he possessed all that was needed to make a noise in a party, and to lead it to its ruin, as he actually did.

CHAPTER VI.

Execution of the Girondists—The Revolutionary Tribunal—Bailly—General Houchard—Madame Roland and the Revolution—Femmes de Monde in the Conciergerie—Eglé—Lamourette—Death of Clavières—The Deputy Cassy—Conversation with the Advocate Lafeutrie—General La Marlière—Strange Scene of Evocation.

THE death of the twenty-two deputies filled the prisoners with gloom and consternation. All hearts were affected by their loss, and the manner in which they had been sacrificed added to this feeling of terror. Without doubt this revolutionary tribunal had been, from its institution, what all judicial commissions will always be, by whatever pretext they may be coloured, or by whatever name they may be hidden, that is to say,—a weapon, and a most formidable weapon, in the hand of the ruling party; but whether it were that this party did not rule exclusively; whether the trade of executioner requires an apprenticeship as well as all others; whether from policy, or chance, before the massacre of the twenty-two deputies, some victims escaped—at long intervals indeed, but still they did escape—and every prisoner beguiled himself by the hope of one of these fortunate chances. But no one could deceive himself any longer when the founders of the Republic had been sacrificed with an inconceivable shamelessness and barbarity. It was evident that tyranny had by this bold stroke made the experiment to determine whether there was any vigour remaining in the body politic; and having found in it nothing but the sad

immobility of a corpse, proceeded to satiate all its rage on it and tear it to pieces. This is what the deputies declared even up to the very place of their execution. Robespierre's people, that is to say all the wicked and all the fools of Paris, pursued these unfortunate men with their usual cries and insults, devised the day before by the secret committee of the Jacobins. Some of them smiled in pity; others did not appear to pay the smallest attention. Duchatel replied in these prophetic words, "Poor Parisians! we leave you in the hands of those who will make you pay very dear for your pleasure of to-day."

From this time forward the revolutionary tribunal worked with disheartening activity; but it gave the preference to distinguished talents and eminent virtue. Such are those whom tyranny particularly requires to be rid of. Immediately after the trial, or rather the scandalous scene that had preceded the death of the deputies, Bailly was despatched to the same theatre. He appeared there with the calm dignity of one of the first men of the age. Neither reproach nor complaint escaped his lips for the six days that he was a prey to this mockery of a tribunal. To the last he replied with the same coolness, the same precision, and the same dignity; and yet the blood of the most careless man boils at reading the questions addressed to him. They might have been somewhat suitable addressed to Mandrin, to Collot d'Herbois, or any other chief of the brigands. But who could help being indignant when reflecting that this tissue of atrocious lies was prepared for one of the first of philosophers, one of the warmest friends of the human race, one of the most distinguished savants that France can claim to her honour? No doubt special orders had been given to make him drain every drop of the cup they had prepared; for within the prison, whither he had so lately been

the bearer of comfort and succour, and where he had appeared in all the splendour of fortune and virtue, he was treated with a refinement of barbarity. The time occupied in dragging him before the tribunal afforded a quarter of an hour's sport to the jailers. They surrounded him with an indecent affectation; and when he hastened to obey them and put an end to their reiterated shouts, the turnkeys pushed him in different directions, and sent him from one to the other, crying, "Here's Bailly! Bailly to you! catch Bailly!" and laughing loudly at the gravity the unfortunate man preserved in the middle of this cannibal dance. Yes, I have seen Bailly, covered with glory and virtue, venerable if only for his years—Bailly whose name is connected with the most glorious deeds of the revolution, soiled by the hands of jailers whose barbarity had been bought, tottering under the attacks of some, upheld by the brutality of others, and treated as their laughing-stock, as a drunken man sometimes becomes to the crowd collected round him. This spectacle was to me sadder than any death, however terrible; for the death of a just man in the midst of suffering is always grand and sacred. It is felt that the executioners do a good office in consecrating him to immortality, and the mind is consoled by what rends the body with grief; but there is nothing but repugnance at ill treatment, and it can hardly be ennobled even by the virtue constrained to endure it.

I must here mention a passage from the "Almanac of Prisons" on the subject of Bailly. It is there stated that one day coming back from the trial and asked by some one how his business was proceeding, he replied, rubbing his hands, "Our good little friend is still alive." The author, who is generally very correct, has here been led astray. Anyone who has ever known Bailly knows that the question and answer are alike foreign to his

character. Bailly did not vary an instant from his grave and gentle manner. Only it might be remarked in the days when he appeared before the tribunal that his gravity had assumed a more vigorous expression, and almost amounted to self-assertion. Besides, he avoided speaking of his trial, and nowhere sought to gather consolation or hopes. If the conversation inclined to literature he joined in it willingly, and would show some spark of that kindly knowledge and delicate taste which dictated the *History of Astronomy* and *Letters on Atlantis*. He never failed whenever he found an opportunity to utter some consoling reflections for misfortune, such as these, "The part of an honest man is the safest even in time of revolution. An individual only requires an enlightened selfishness to put him in the way of justice and truth. Now that innocence can be sacrificed with impunity the action of crime is uncertain. There is a vast difference between the death of a good and of a wicked man, so great that the generality of men cannot measure it. It is false, quite false, to suppose that a crime can ever be useful. We must know how to bear death as an inconvenience incidental to the vocation of an honest man; but life has attractions for virtuous hearts, and we need not be ashamed of regretting them. I should have a bad opinion of anyone who had not a regret to leave behind him when he died."

I twice saw Bailly agitated when speaking of his wife, of the modest house he had selected at Mélun, and the peaceful days he had hoped to pass with her there. I only knew Madame Bailly from the miserable jokes that were passed on her, but respected her none the less. I can suppose from these very things that if she did not follow her husband in his literary career, she had been able to gain his affection by such real virtues as are more suited to her sex than knowledge, which seldom adorns it,

and more usually corrupts it. Indeed, the affection that her husband bore to her even thus received a more touching character The philosopher, shedding tears over his remembrance of a woman who displayed no kind of brilliant aspect, thus returned to the class of ordinary mortals, and we love the points of contact that are left between us and our superiors.

Once only did Bailly break the silence that he preserved on political matters. It was on the day when the solemn apostasy of Bishop Gobel formed a prelude to the ridiculously impious farces, the exhibition of which the Convention was so often forced to permit in the midst of it. The president, otherwise a very obscure person, whose name I do not remember, but certainly a man without any foresight, applauded the proceeding of the shameless priest as long as his voice held out, and with an answer worthy of the original address. Bailly drew a deep sigh when the article in the paper was read, and observed, "I am surprised at this proceeding of the Bishop of Paris, but grieved at the answer of the president. What sort of a man is this president?" His name was read, but did not conduce to much better knowledge of him. Bailly said, "Ah! my lord president, whoever you may be, what would you substitute? I hope that the Convention will not separate without having given you the lie."

There was a limit even to these preliminary horrors. The day before his death Bailly had a presage of the next day's events, and spoke of them without emotion. He said, "They have ordered all the assistants to be present on my account, and I am afraid that the simple execution of the sentence may not satisfy them, and the consequences would be dangerous; for I am persuaded that the police will be on the watch." "What," answered I to him, "why, even yesterday, indeed every

day, you seemed undisturbed at the turn which the debates and disposition of the tribunal were taking. Were you deceiving us?" "No," replied Bailly; "but I was setting you the example of never despairing of the laws of your country." I left him with a breaking heart, and longing to give a course to my tears for this excellent man. I could not but give way to the feelings that agitated me when I got back to my room. I repeated, "What! can men who bear the name of jurors find that Bailly a murderer?" A certain Bon, a painter of portraits, a dirty little Jacobin, had fallen to our lot. He was a great nuisance to me, and said, "We must not speak evil of the tribunal; it will not exactly condemn Bailly as a murderer, but as a great criminal." "Wretch!" I replied, "you never cease talking about great criminals, and praising the cartloads of your tribunal. Give me your definition of a great criminal, or I will throttle you." And I really had him by the neck when Lamourette, springing from his couch, snatched my prey from me and scolded me roundly for this outburst of passion. I became more calm without being quieter, and spent the night in imagining chances that might save Bailly, and then overthrowing them. Tired of not discovering any well-founded hope, I wished, since I was devoted to the same fate, to die with him. Next day I went down into his room. I inquired how he had passed the night, and was told that he had slept as usual. He had already risen and drunk his cup of chocolate. I congratulated him on his appetite. He said he was satisfied with it; besides, he liked chocolate, because it was nourishing without being heavy, and calmed the temper, so that he often had recourse to it. I soon went away; his moments were too precious to be wasted; but I watched on the staircase for his passing to give him a last adieu. I saw him for three-quarters of an hour conversing with

a young man in the uniform of a national guard, one of his relations. The young man was affected even to tears; Bailly remained calm. Towards the end of the interview he rapidly drank two cups of plain coffee. The young man went away. I entered the gallery. He seemed inclined to speak to me. I trembled, and did not know how to begin. At last I expressed my surprise at his drinking coffee without milk after chocolate. "I drank chocolate," said Bailly to me, "because it soothes and supports; but as I have a somewhat difficult journey to take, and do not trust my constitution, I had the coffee after it, for it is exciting and restorative; and with such provision I hope I shall hold out to the last." He was called at this moment, and I embraced him for the last time. He wished me a better fate, and thanked me tenderly for the interest I had taken in him.

General Houchard was dragged to the same theatre immediately after Bailly. It was hard to imagine a suspicion of treason or intrigue on the face of this old warrior. Houchard was six feet high, fierce in manner, and terrible in aspect. A wound had distorted his mouth and turned it towards the left ear. His upper lip had been divided by a sabre-cut, which had also touched the nose; and two other sabre-cuts had made two parallel furrows in his left cheek. The remainder of his body had not fared any better than his head. His breast was scored with scars. It seemed as if victory had amused herself with mutilating him. He spoke a barbarous jargon, half German, half French, rendered more rugged still by his difficulty of utterance. Bred amid the rudeness of camps, and having purchased with his own blood each grade from private to general, the roughness of his manners enhanced his forbidding countenance. I do not know whether he was an able general; but at least it is certain he had been a fortunate one. He had constantly

obtained advantages at the head of the armies of the Republic. He delivered Dunkirk, and gained the memorable day of Hondschott over the Duke of York. It was not the fault of his dispositions if the English army escaped finding its Caudine forks on the plains of Flanders. Recalled, imprisoned, accused as the consequence of a system that was still less likely to forgive a general for victory than for defeat, there was still some difficulty in preparing an indictment against him. After the customary protocol on complicity with those who made attempts against liberty, the sovereignty of the people, the unity and indivisibility of the Republic, he was accused of *not having killed enough English.* These were the terms. According to the impudent compiler, not one of them should have escaped from the plains of Flanders; and any Englishman alive after the day of Hondschott was a conclusive witness against the French general. The indignation of the old warrior was raised by the stupidity, the ignorance, and especially the impudence, that had dictated the preparation of this indictment. He himself prepared a kind of harangue for his defence, and I always regret that I omitted to take a copy. Certainly the style was not that of the Academy; but it breathed a wild eloquence, and, above all, the indignation of great valour. One seemed to hear Marius among the marshes of Minturnæ. Here and there were comparisons which recalled the songs of Homer or of Ossian. I admit that I conceived a higher opinion of Houchard when I had read it, and I saw that nature had apportioned a spark of genius to him that had not been extinguished by the manners and tone of the day. He modestly presented his harangue to me for criticism, and I took good care not to advise him to alter anything in it. I tried to induce him to deliver it exactly as it was written; but he did not perceive the value of my advice, and

on my refusal to alter it, addressed himself to a miserable rogue named Osselin, who diluted this really remarkable production into the style of the law courts, and took a pretty heavy fee for this bad service. Houchard went to his trial provided with Osselin's performance, and assisted by an official counsel for the defence, once an attorney's clerk; and he, knowing nothing of the art of war except by the fights in the lanes of Paris, proceeded to justify the campaigns of the general-in-chief before a band of drunken cobblers, with a monk for president. Such was in general the character of all the revolutionary institutions, presenting on one side an excess of horror, on the other an excess of absurdity; and when everything impelled the man of feeling to tears, the sage was still tempted to smile. It is easy to imagine the general's fate—it was determined beforehand; but what he did not expect, what no one could expect, was that the monk Dumas dared to reproach Houchard with cowardice! At this word, the commencement of the sufferings of the old warrior, he tore open his clothes and cried, showing his breast covered with scars, "Citizens of the jury, read my answer, it is written there!" This movement, which would have roused the people of Rome, was considered very impertinent by the dregs of Paris. They ordered Houchard to be silent, and he fell back on the fatal seat drowned in tears. Perhaps they were the first that had ever fallen from his eyes. After that, sentence could be passed, he could be led to execution, murdered, not in the least knowing what passed around him. He had only one feeling in his heart, that of despair, and only one word in his mouth, which he repeated even to the scaffold, "The wretch! he called me a coward." And when, on coming back to the prison, he was asked what was the issue of his trial, he answered, "He called me a coward," and thought nothing of all the rest. So true it is that

to great courage there is a kind of insult worse than death.

Probably the revolutionary tribunal had not sufficient confidence in the savage constancy of its spectators, and thought it must, like other mountebanks, vary its spectacle to retain the crowd. After the tragedy of Houchard it produced the drama of Madame Roland. A more complete contrast could not be obtained. I had refused many of my acquaintance who offered to introduce me to her when she held an office for politics and wit at the house of the home-secretary; and I attributed to party spirit the eulogiums poured out on her, and the celebrity she had all at once obtained. Besides, I had been near enough to observe closely all the women who had placed their names on the records of the Revolution, and had come at last not to esteem any one of them. Reflecting on it, I saw that a woman in the midst of such a frightful catastrophe could only retain the vices of her sex, and none of the virtues. Their sweet, amiable, and sensitive qualities increase, and are developed in the bosom of peace and domestic enjoyment; in the heat of argument they retire, and are lost in the exasperation of parties and the shock of passion. The tender and delicate foot of woman is unfitted to tread these paths bristling with iron and stained with blood. In order to walk there steadily she must make herself a man, and a masculine woman is a monster in my eyes. Ah! let them leave the field of contention and the issue of combats to us, to whom nature has allotted the unenviable advantage of strength. We are sufficient for this cruel destiny; but let them keep to the more sweet and easy duty of pouring balm into wounds and wiping away tears. Let their expansive and compassionate soul search for sorrow wherever it may be found, and may they bless the social rule that does not permit them to hate!

My opinion on this point was confirmed when I was brought into contact with Madame Roland by our common misfortune. Her arrival at the Conciergerie was an event, and I was then curious to know this woman who had been obscure fifteen months ago, and had in so short a time won numbers of friends, still greater numbers of enemies, very elevated rank, a prison and death. Madame Roland was from thirty-five to forty years of age. Her face was not regularly beautiful, but very agreeable. She had beautiful fair hair, and blue, well-opened eyes. Her figure was graceful, and her hand perfectly shaped. Her looks were expressive, and even in repose her countenance was noble and interesting in expression. She had no occasion to speak for her ability to be perceived; but no woman could speak so purely, gracefully, and elegantly. She owed the power of giving a rhythm and a really new cadence to the French language to her familiarity with the tongue of Italy. And she enhanced still more the harmony of her voice by gestures full of truth and nobleness, and by the expression of her eyes, which became animated as she spoke. I felt each day a new charm in listening to her, less from what she said than from the magic of her utterance. She united to these gifts, so rare in themselves, much natural intellect and extensive acquaintance with literature and political economy. Thus it was that I beheld Madame Roland, and I must confess that I beheld her with an unfavourable prejudice.

She had imbibed a taste, or, in her own words, a passion for liberty from reading the great writers of antiquity. In them she had seen humanity at a pitch of elevation of which she had always been ambitious from her youth. Cato the Elder was her hero, and it was probably from respect for this last of the Romans that she had made her husband adopt their rough-

ness and their costume. I am willing to believe that Madame Roland's passion for liberty flowed in part from a pure source; but when transported from ancient to modern history it was perceptible that the late government's oblivion of her talents, produced under her husband's name, had some part in her fervour for the new. She did not conceal her satisfaction in her husband's having been twice in the ministry, and she took so much pains to prove that resentment was no motive for the famous letter to Louis XVI., that she completely convinced a judicious observer that it was the chief motive. Besides, this woman of vivid imagination, led on by her head rather than by her heart, threw the violence of a passion into her opinions; she loved all who shared them, and detested those who did not. In this respect she was especially unjust. She would not recognise talents, probity, virtue, or intelligence in anyone besides Roland and her admirers; everywhere else she could only see baseness, ignorance, or treason. She had inspired into the whole party a heat of prejudice which contributed not a little to alienate minds, and to raise up hatred. More than once have I taken Madame Roland to task on this subject, and thus excited sufficiently spirited discussion. I remember, among other things, that we were one day on the subject of Louis XVI., when she was violently tearing his memory to pieces. I reminded her of the respect due to misfortune; I considered that the man in whom she would allow nothing tolerable had displayed a lofty courage in the depth of misfortune, and that he had met death with true magnanimity. "Very well," said she, "he was fine enough on the scaffold; but there is no reason for giving him credit for it. Kings are reared from childhood to act a part." A profoundly cruel irony, showing more of resentment against the corruption of the old rule than of

republican candour or humanity. Vanity was the vehicle that had elevated this woman to the pitch we have seen; she was continually under its influence, and made no secret of it. At the risk of abasing her husband to the position of an automaton, and of only leaving him his doubtful virtue, she loudly laid claim to the principal share in his literary productions and all his political glory. She deprived others of the pleasure of praising them by informing them on this point. Nothing seemed to her so natural, and she believed that this was another analogy with the most famous personages of antiquity. She would not see that there was as much difference between the wife of Roland and of the Roman consul as between the Brutus of the revolutionary tribunal and him of the Capitol.

A perpetual enthusiast on the idea of transforming the French into Greeks and Romans, she would never recognise the absurdity of her system, and defended it with as much warmth as grace; and when the lady surprised me by the beauty of her thoughts and the elevation of her language, I could no longer recognise her who, by her own confession, frequented the tribunes of the Jacobins, and soiled herself with the mud of fraternal societies.

Separate Madame Roland from the Revolution, and she no more appears the same person. No one could define better than she could the duties of wife and mother, or could more eloquently prove that a woman's only happiness was in the performance of these sacred obligations. On her lips a picture of domestic enjoyment assumed a soft and enchanting tint; tears fell from her eyes when she spoke of her husband and daughter; the female partisan had disappeared; and she was a sensitive and gentle woman, singing the praises of virtue in the style of Fénélon. I did not know enough of Madame Roland, and so am ignorant whether her practice justified the sublimity

of her theory. While talking of the union of virtuous hearts, and vaunting the energy that it inspires, she said to me, "The coldness of the French astonishes me. If I had been at liberty and my husband led to execution, I should have stabbed myself at the foot of the scaffold; and I am convinced that when Roland learns my death he will pierce his own heart." She was not mistaken.

I must add to her honour that she had formed for herself a most honourable empire even in the depths of the dungeon. The Duchess de Grammont and a pick-pocket were cast indifferently upon the same straw and guarded by the same bolts, Madame Roland and a wretch off the streets, a good nun and a jail bird of the Salpètrière. This mixture was cruel to the high-bred women, because they were daily obliged to behold horrible or disgusting spectacles. We were waked every night by the cries of wretches tearing one another to pieces. The room where Madame Roland dwelt had become an asylum of peace in the midst of this infernal spot. If she went down into the yard her presence recalled orderliness, and these women over whom no recognised power had the slightest hold, were restrained by the fear of displeasing her. She distributed assistance in money to the most needy, and advice, consolation, and hope to all. She walked about, like a tutelary divinity, surrounded by these women, who pressed about her. She was very different from that foul courtesan, the shame of Louis XV. and of his age—that Du Barry who was imprisoned in the same place, and was treated by other women there with energetic equality, though she still preserved even there the unctuous demeanour and haughty airs of a royal mistress.

The day Madame Roland had to appear before the tribunal Clavières gave me a commission to her. I excused myself; Clavières insisted, pointing out that

an interview between him and her on such a day might harm them both. I yielded, and watched for the moment when she left her room, in order to meet her in the passage. She was waiting at the gate to be called. She was attired with some care; she wore a white English muslin trimmed with blonde, with a black velvet sash; her head was carefully dressed in a light hat of elegant simplicity, her beautiful hair streaming over her shoulders. Her expression seemed to me more animated than usual; her colour was charming, and a smile rested on her lips. With one hand she held up the skirt of her dress, and the other was abandoned to a crowd of women who thronged to kiss it. Those who were informed of the fate that awaited her sobbed around and recommended her to Providence. There is no describing the scene, it must have been seen to be imagined. Madame Roland replied to all with affectionate kindness; she made no promise of returning; she did not announce that she was going to her death; but the last words she said to them were so many touching bits of advice. She exhorted them to peace—courage—hope—to the practice of the virtues suitable in suffering. An old jailer named Fontenay, whose kind heart had resisted the influence of his cruel office for thirty years, came weeping to open the gate for her. As she passed I performed Clavières' commission; she answered me in a few words, with a steady voice, and was beginning a sentence, when two jailers from within called her to the tribunal. At this summons, so dreadful to any save herself, she stopped and said, pressing my hand, "Adieu, sir. Let us make peace. It is time." Raising her eyes to my face she saw that I was repressing my tears, and was greatly agitated; she seemed to perceive it, but only added "Courage."

Amid these lugubrious scenes, daily renewed, the

French women lost none of their character, they were as ready as ever to sacrifice to the necessity of pleasing. The part of the prison that we lived in looked out on the women's yard. The only place where we could breathe a little more at our ease was a space about ten to twelve feet long and seven wide, formed of two bays of the vaulting, and making a landing for the staircase, and a passage from the women's yard to the wicket. This kind of corridor was closed by iron bars on the side towards the yard, but the bars were not so close as to compel a Frenchman to do nothing but despair. As the corridor was our favourite promenade, and our only one, we went down to it as soon as we were let out of our dungeons. The women came out at the same time, but not so quickly as we did, dress claiming its prescriptive rights. They appeared in the morning in a coquettish demi-toilette, every detail of which was arranged with a freshness and grace that by no means suggested that they had passed the night on a pallet, and oftener still on fetid straw. Generally the women of the world who were taken to the Conciergerie preserved there the sacred fire of good breeding and taste even to the very last. When they had appeared in demi-toilette in the morning, they returned to their rooms, and about midday they might be seen coming down attired elegantly, their hair beautifully dressed. Neither were their manners those of the morning; they were more decided and dignified. Towards evening they appeared again in an undress. I observed that almost all women who could manage it were faithful to three costumes a-day. The others supplied the want of elegance by such neatness as was compatible with the locality. The women's yard contained a treasure, a fountain, that supplied them with as much water as they wanted; and every morning I observed the un-

lucky ones, who had not brought more than one garment with them, and perhaps had no more, engaged in washing, bleaching or drying it with lively emulation. The first hour of the day was sacred to these cares, and nothing would have disturbed them, not even an indictment. Richardson has observed that the care of their chattels and the passion for packing equal, if they do not surpass, the highest interests in the minds of women.

I am convinced that at this time no promenade in Paris could produce an assemblage of women so elegantly appointed as the yard of the Conciergerie at noon; it was like a flower-bed adorned with flowers, but fenced round with iron. France is probably the only country, and the French the only women, who could furnish such strange contrasts, producing all that is most attractive and voluptuous in the most horrible and disgusting place in the universe. I liked to watch the ladies at noon, but preferred to talk to them in the morning, and I took my share of more intimate converse in the evening, when I ran no risk of disturbing any one's bliss; for at nightfall all was in our favour, the increasing darkness, the weariness of the jailers, the absence of most of the prisoners, and the discretion of the rest. In the tranquil interval that precedes night, there was many a blessing on the want of foresight of the architect who designed the grating! And yet the beings who could thus forget themselves had their death-warrants in their pockets. Besides, I was almost a witness to a scene of this kind. A woman about forty years old, but still fresh, preserving her beauty and an elegant figure, was condemned to death, in the first decade of Frimaire, with her lover, an officer of the army of the North, a young man who seemed to unite a high spirit to a handsome face. They came from the tribunal

about six o'clock in the evening, and were separated for the night. She managed to retain in reserve some means of seduction, which she employed with such success as to obtain her reunion with her lover. They gave up their last night to love, they tasted the cup of pleasure once more, and only tore themselves away from each other's arms to mount the fatal cart.

I have never been able to do anything but wonder at such indifference, and feel that I was not in the least made for it. My mind is not yet decided whether it lowered or raised the persons who exhibited it; but it is certain that it had an aspect peculiar to itself. The neighbourhood of the ladies gave us dissipations of a lighter character of which I was more jealous. We often had the pleasure of breakfasting with them. Benches of about the height to lean on were set against the grating in different places, and on them were placed all together, and with the confusion unavoidable in the place and at the time, not merely the preparations for, but the substantial parts of breakfast, and if any room was left on the ladies' side the graces were not slow in taking possession of it. They were not indeed the same graces as those carelessly displayed on the sofa or around an elegant tea-table; but were more original and attractive. While despatching the meats seasoned by hunger, in spite of the purveyor, graceful observations, witty allusions, and striking repartees were exchanged on either side of the grating. There was agreeable conversation on all subjects. Misfortune was only treated like a naughty child, to be merely laughed at and thrust aside. In fact, there was open merriment at the divinity of Marat, the priesthood of Robespierre, and the magistrateship of Fouquier; and the greeting to all that blood-stained crew seemed to be, "You may kill us when you please, but you cannot hinder us from being sociable." This descrip-

tion is not in the least dressed up, and may well be believed when I add that the guests were, perhaps, all the persons of distinguished ability still left in France, and I can call to witness the only two men who escaped at the Conciergerie, by what miracle I know not, M. Riouffe, at last known to be the author of *Mémoires d'un Détenu*, and M. Marchena, whom the revolution attracted from Spain, and who would be an ornament to any country.

I do not know what spirit fortified and elevated the minds of all, steeping them in energy; but I only saw one man show tokens of pusillanimity; it was M. du Châtelet. He was brought from the Madelonettes in a pitiable state of intoxication, and was thrown upon a bed, where he spent the night. Next day he had regained his reason, and was not much the better for it. He hawked about everywhere his complaints, tears, and regrets, and seemed astonished at not finding anyone disposed to sympathise with him. He came to the ladies' grating, and there as elsewhere he continued crying and mumbling his lamentations. A girl—more than a girl—looked at him as a novel object, and asked what he could be? When informed, she went to him and said, "Fie! are you weeping? Know, M. le Duc, that those who have no name acquire one here, and that those who have one ought to learn how to bear it." It may be supposed that the personage from whom this sound lesson issued was an aristocrat, and nothing could be more true. It might be asked where in the world aristocracy could perch itself; for then it was nestled in a wretched girl from the streets, who played her part to the end with a kind of heroism that none of the prudes of the halls of Coblentz would have been capable of.

She was called Eglé, and was from about seventeen to twenty years of age. For the last two years she had had lodgings in the Rue Fromanteau, having before

lived in a garret in the Faubourg Saint Antoine. At first, one of the many victims of the corruption of our manners, she had afterwards become a very active agent in carrying it on, but the soul had retained its vigour amid all the stains of the person. Eglé detested the new order of things, and did not conceal her sentiments. She published her opinions at the corners of the streets, and accompanied the expression of them with seditious remarks and outcries. The police had arrested her and taken her to the Conciergerie with one of her companions, whom she had infected with her aristocratic poison and her passion for spreading it. Chaumette had conceived the idea of having these two poor girls brought before the tribunal at the same time as the Queen, and sending all three to execution in the same cart. Nothing could agree better with his famous accusation, and it must be owned that this galley-slave, become the prosecutor-general of the commune of Paris, was proceeding consistently. The committee of government considered that there was something unsuitable in this jest; it was decided that Marie Antoinette of Austria should go alone to her death, and poor Eglé was reserved for a better occasion.

Three months had passed since the Queen's death, and it is likely that Eglé and her companion might have been forgotten, if the former had observed the most ordinary reserve; but she would have thought it shameful to dissemble, or even to be silent, and she gave them such a seditious course in the midst of the Conciergerie that Fouquier wanted to have done with her.

No one took the trouble to prepare a new indictment against these two girls, but looked up that which had been prepared for Chaumette's project, and it was left in its primitive simplicity, so that Eglé and her companion found themselves absolutely and precisely accused of

having been in communication with the widow Capet, and of conspiring with her against the sovereignty and liberty of the people. I read it, and can bear witness to it.

Eglé was proud of her indictment, but indignant at the articles that it contained. She could not conceive it possible for anyone to lie in such a stupid way, and threw out some broad sarcasms against the tribunal, which had a merit of their own, but only in her mouth. I interrupted her in the middle of one of these philippics, and said to her, "Notwithstanding all that, my dear Eglé, if you had been led to the scaffold with the Queen, there would not have been any difference between her and you, and you would have seemed her equal." "Yes," she answered, "but I should have caught the rogues nicely." "How would you have done that?" "How? Why, right in the middle of the way I should have cast myself at her feet, and executioner or devil would never have made me get up." The poor girl must be pardoned for such a piece of extravagance. She was born in the bosom of ignorance and poverty, the pursuit of her deplorable condition had left her no time for thought or consideration. So it is not surprising that she could never raise her thoughts to the region where kings appear on the same level as other mortals; and, besides, what a school of morals and republican notions was the Rue Fromanteau!

Before the tribunal, Eglé avowed the royalist speeches and exclamations imputed to her; but when they came to the head of her complicity with the Queen—"As for that," said she, raising her shoulders, "that is a fine story, and upon my word you are uncommonly clever; I an accomplice of her you call the widow Capet, who really was the Queen in spite of your malice. I, a poor girl, who gained my living at the street corners, and

could not have got near a scullion of her kitchen! This is worthy of a pack of good-for-nothings and idiots like you!" Notwithstanding this sally, Eglé found favour at the tribunal. A juror observed that she was probably drunk when she made the speeches imputed to her, since even now she was excited, and others — old acquaintances—seconded him. Eglé refused this excuse, and the reasons given for it, with the same boldness; she maintained that if there was anyone drunk among the honourable company, it was not herself, and as a proof of that, she maintained she had made the speeches imputed to her in cold blood, and repeated them exactly, though precautions were taken to make her keep silence. They forced her to sit down, and the tribunal went on to her companion. She found the same feeling in the jury, doubtless from having known her of old. She hesitated, less decided than Eglé, and accepted the imputation of drunkenness that was made to save her from death. Eglé indignantly broke silence, cried out to her companion that her weakness was a crime, that she was dishonouring herself (the word is precious), and recalled her to courage and truth. The other, now more confused, and trembling at Eglé rather than at the judges, abjured her momentary weakness and confessed that she also had been guilty in cold blood. The tribunal made a proper difference in its decision, sent Eglé to the scaffold as an incorrigible royalist, and was contented with shutting up the other in the Salpetrière for some twenty years. When the judgment was read, Eglé smiled as she heard the reasons that established her guilt of the crime of counter-revolution, and condemned her to death; but when they came to the article that confiscated her goods, she said to the president, "You thief, I expected that from you. I wish you joy of my goods! I will answer for it that, if you eat them all, they will not disagree with you." Eglé,

when she returned from the trial, blamed her companion's conduct, and was well satisfied with her own; she was only afraid of *going to sleep with the devil.* I give her own language. The angel of this prison, the good M. Emery, comforted her, and she sprang into the cart as lightly as a bird. If it was worth while to make inquiries as to the origin of this poor girl, it would doubtless be discovered that she had received a detestable education. Some good woman had implanted the germ of the prejudices in favour of the former state of things in Eglé's mind. The active dissipation of her life might have stifled it for a long time, but the persecutions of the revolution had, it would seem, favoured its development, and it reached its height in this ardent soul, with a capacity for passions of more than one kind.

I was interrupted in these bitter thoughts by Lamourette, the constitutional Bishop of Lyons, who shared my room. His society was a pleasure to me. Lamourette was an educated man, a good orator, and, at the time of the Revolution, one of the most distinguished priests of the Order of the Oratory. In common with almost all the members of this learned congregation, he had allowed himself to be led away by the new principles, and was on this account appointed Bishop of Lyons. During the siege he displayed the zeal and courage in which French priests have never been deficient in time of danger, carrying ghostly aid to his sheep in the midst of the balls and grape-shot. Our good Abbé Rosier, author of the *Dictionary of Agriculture*, as well as his vicar-general, were killed there. The bishop was only wounded, but he expected that the executioner's steel would complete the work of the soldiers of Dubois de Crancé. He was by no means discouraged, and I never saw any one carry Christian stoicism to such an extent. He might be seen regularly and unaffectedly going through the daily

offices of a priest. Though a constitutional bishop, and so apparently greatly opposed to M. Emery, ex-Superior of Saint Sulpice, who was also among our companions in misery, he shared the good works of that excellent man. When Lamourette was taken before the tribunal, he confessed what they accused him of as one of the most sacred duties of his profession, confessed his faith, made the sign of the cross, and awaited his condemnation. He charged me to publish his retractation of the oath he had taken to the civil constitution of the clergy. I will not fail in so doing. Lamourette, who saw me overwhelmed with grief on returning from the wicket, thought that I had been informed that I should be brought before the tribunal next day, and commenced an exhortation suitable to the gravity of the position. I informed him of his mistake, and explained the cause of my dejection. He replied somewhat sharply, and tried to show me that my wife's coming should be a great consolation, happen what might. To all my objections, he contented himself with answering, "Only learn to be a good Christian, and you will not experience such violent agitation."

During the night that followed this very day, we were both of us subjected to a painful trial. The departure of the Girondists had left five places vacant in the room that I was lodged in. They were occupied by Lamourette; a former prior of Molisme named Saumenil; Boos, the portrait-painter; a Parisian tailor, and Clavières, the ex-minister of finance. This chamber was an exception to the rest. It was so orderly and quiet that it had acquired the name of the room of the seven wise men. Clavières was a materialist, the bishop and the prior very pious priests, the tailor was a protestant, and the painter nothing at all. All this agreed delightfully. Clavières had attempted a few jokes when our priests were saying their breviary together, but I gave

him a sharp set-down, and made him discontinue that bad habit. The very day of my first interview with my wife, Clavières received his indictment, and was informed that he would be tried the next day. He read this indictment half through, and then trampled it under foot in an outbreak of indignation. I picked it up. "Read it," said Clavières to me, "if you are bold enough, and tell me what is left for a man of spirit to do." I read a long compendium, in which all the crimes of Clavières were related, and yet his real ones were not there. I advised him to send for his advocate. "Why so?" he replied. "I prefer to send for Montessin, my son-in-law, and consult with him about my daughter's fortune." I said, "The one is no hindrance to the other." He sent for them both. I invited him to make a third at dinner with Lamourette and myself, as he would be better there than at a somewhat noisy table where he usually had his meals with a party of eight. He refused, went to dinner as usual, ate neither more nor less than was his wont, and preserved his coolness; only he cleverly made prize of the carving knife, and brought it into our room. In the afternoon he saw his son-in-law and his advocate, and said no more to us about his trial. He only told me that the advocate, whose name was Lafeutrie, was either a knave or a fool, for he had tried to persuade him that he had brought off patients in worse case than himself. To which I answered. He went on, "Citizen for the defence, you have not felt my pulse. Observe, I do not consult you on the grounds of my indictment, but only whether I can demand a delay, so as to procure the large number of proofs required to refute twenty items of accusation; since no delay can possibly be obtained, there is nothing left for me to do but to thank you."

The hour arrived when the rooms were closed. We

were shut up in ours, and Clavières with us. The conversation fell, as it often did, on the miseries of our situation, and Lamourette dexterously brought in some reflections on the shortness of life, which only the rage of our persecutors could render a little shorter. Every one went to bed and to sleep, for one is sure to sleep. The first nights spent in a prison are sleepless, unless to a person possessed of great force of character; but nature soon recovers her inalienable rights, and for my part I observed that from the day that I was imprisoned, my dreams were of scenes of entire liberty, and probably when I get out (if I get out) I shall dream of prisons and dungeons again.

An hour after we had gone to bed and to sleep, I was waked by a cry from Lamourette. "Clavières! wretched man! what have you done?" Then I heard distinctly two equally horrible sounds; the death-rattle of a man, and the sound of blood dropping on the pavement. I sprang from my bed; all the other five did the same. What was to be done? what was to become of us? No aid from without could be called, there was no means of procuring a light; there was only a lanthorn in one of the passages of the Palais de Justice, opposite to the window of our room, which cast some feeble rays, sufficient to show this scene of horror, but not enough to make it clear. The two priests flung themselves on their knees, and begged us to do the same, to entreat the mercy of God upon the unhappy man whose self-destruction we were beholding. Every one knelt. A quarter of an hour later, there was nothing more to be heard but the dropping of the blood. We returned to our beds, but as we had trodden on the blood that covered the floor, we in our turn soiled our beds, and next day, at the opening of this melancholy retreat, it looked like the shambles, and of what flesh, good heavens!

When there was a kind of lull we could manage to gather together several circumstances that ought to have warned us of Clavières' resolution. More than once he had protested that he would not debase the dignity of man so far as to appear before the infamous tribunal. He had consulted the painter Boos on the attitudes in which pictures and statues represented persons stabbing themselves with daggers, and he had noted the spot on the left side that would give the readiest access to a blow meant to reach the auricle of the heart. In fact, it was evident by his talk the night before that he spurned the tribunal, and there was no means of escape but death that very night. But the kind of death he had chosen required an incredible amount of determination; it is hardly possible to understand that lying upon a mere mattress upon straps, without any steady resting-place, it was possible for him to rest the dagger upon his left hand, guide it to the part he intended to pierce, and drive it in with the right hand by several repeated efforts, and all this without a cry, without any clumsy movement that might have waked us. Yet such, according to scientific evidence, was the only manner in which he could have put himself to death. So perished Clavières, the first minister of finance of the Republic. He was one of the famous triumvirate—Roland, Clavières, and Servan—who, when summoned by Louis XVI. to his defence, gave themselves over to the Jacobins, and presided over scenes that, increasing daily in violence, ended in the execution of that excellent prince. Roland had stabbed himself on the road to Rouen a fortnight before the death of Clavières; Servan had obtained a short respite by hastening to enter the army, but pitiless destiny was pursuing him even thither, when death preserved him from the recompense that his party were preparing for him.

Clavières was a Genevese—yes, and a distinguished

Genevese, that is to say that he was a man of sense, an able arithmetician, and a good writer. He had taken lessons from Pauchan, and was regarded as one of his best pupils. Clavières was in the financial department when M. Necker was at its head. He was opposed to his celebrated countryman as long as the Constitutional Assembly lasted; he sought weapons against him among the Jacobins, and when these became masters, Clavières of course was their man. When he became the minister of the Republic, he believed himself on the point of realising his great economical and financial projects, and of exposing what he called poor Necker's emphatic ignorance. The Jacobins, who understood nothing at all about it, and to whom he refused the right of pillage, treated him as a thief and intriguer, arrested him as one, and were going to cut off his head, when he had the impertinence to anticipate them.

I had foreseen that the night's catastrophe would provoke an inquiry, where the chamber companions of Clavières would figure at least as witnesses, and I did not care to give my name among them. As soon as I could, I went down to the prison office, where I had managed to obtain a little favour by making copies or preparing tables for the clerk. I communicated to him my fear of appearing in the formal report, and he managed to get me off, advising me, as a precaution, to remain in the office while the inquiry was being conducted. I was still there when the body of my room-fellow was brought down and placed in the condemned cell. Some madmen, thirsting for his execution, were waiting to depose against him at the tribunal. When informed that he had committed suicide, they would not believe it, and went down to certify themselves. On coming to the body, they poured forth most horrible abuse against the wretch who had dared to rob them of

the pleasure of tasting of his punishment. They snatched off the cloak that was thrown over the bloody corpse, hurled themselves furiously upon it, and struck it with their hands and feet. A dance of cannibals is not nearly so horrible as was this scene, which at once displayed the ferocity of the savage, and the extreme corruption of the civilised man. I departed from this scene feeling the remembrance of it will never be effaced from my mind. However, the tribunal steadily pursued its course of slaughter to right and left, whatever was presented to it, without the smallest partiality. I had great difficulty in persuading myself that my wife could ever contrive to withdraw me from the fate that overtook my companions one after another. I was called to the wicket again, but thenceforward I no longer went down there in anxiety, but in delight at meeting my guardian angel. I looked for my wife, but only saw some charwomen who performed the office of messengers at the prison doors. These women were allowed by the porter to perform commissions for the prisoners, bring them food, and pay them small domestic services. Some young ladies who were impatient to get a sight of the prisoners, and could not get permits, conceived the idea of putting on the dress of these women, taking their baskets, and getting into the prison under this disguise. The price of service was a ten franc assignat to the woman who furnished the disguise, and as much more to the jailer who consented to be deceived. And the disguised lady was obliged to fill and empty her basket, as the real charwoman would have done. My wife had donned this contraband garb, and at first I did not recognise her beneath it, but was only surprised to be thus familiarly accosted by a servant as she said, "This time, you will not complain of my elegance; what do you think of it?" On hearing her voice I perceived my mis-

take, looked at her, and answered by a foolish burst of laughter, and she answered by another equally polite. After a good conversation my wife said, "This is not all, I come here as commissioner for a M. Ducourneau; I must give him his clean linen, and take back the other; I have some letters, snuff, and books for him. I know nothing about him, but the charwoman told me that if I had him called he would come at once." "Quite true, and I will have him called." Ducourneau came down. He was from Bordeaux, of the party of the Girondists, a clever young man, who could make capital verses. The charwoman addressed him with great embarrassment. "I am, *sir*," she said to him, "the woman who usually performs your commissions." "No more, citizen," answered Ducourneau, quickly, "the *sir* has told me all; it has told me that you are a charming woman, brave, and an aristocrat. That is what I like them to be, and I am at your feet. Let us leave out household matters, and talk of something better. I congratulate Citizen Beugnot on his happiness in knowing you." "There is good reason for it," I answered, "for the charwoman to-day is my wife." Then by means of this masquerade, and thanks to Ducourneau, there sprung up between us so merry a conversation that, perhaps, nowhere in Paris (at the same time) was there such joyous laughter. Such are we poor Frenchmen! Ducourneau, when he went back to his room, composed a very pretty poem for my wife, entitled the *Revolutionary Messenger*. This amiable child of the Garonne was not allowed time to climb the first steps of our Parnassus; a week after this scene he had swelled the catalogue of men who died with a smile.

As I remained three months at the Conciergerie after my wife came to Paris, I continually formed new acquaintances there, and lost them a few days later, but

sometimes with circumstances worth recollecting. For example, a deputy of the Convention, from Calvados, named Cussy, had been brought to the Conciergerie, said to be outlawed. It is well-known that a man said to be outlawed was, at that time, simply given up to the executioner, and that his arrest and execution were the same thing. Citoyen Cussy was a man of some consequence in his own department; he had figured with honour in the Constitutional Assembly, and his personal qualities were worthy of interest. He had very good reasons for thinking that the sentence of outlawry, in virtue of which he had been arrested, did not apply to himself, and he addressed a petition to the Conventional Assembly to decide the point. The answer of the Assembly was life or death to him. From the day when his petition was sent to the Convention, two of us stood sentry at the wicket to seize on the evening paper, and only give it up to the curious if there should be no mention of Cussy in it, or if the decision of the Convention should be in his favour. Our precaution was successful for several days. On one only did it fail, and on that day the paper fell into the hands of the man himself. He brought it as usual into the room where the prisoners assembled to listen to it, and began to read it. We all felt a mortal dread, and angry looks were cast on the guardians of the wicket, as if to reproach them for their culpable negligence. De Cussy read aloud, and did not seem at all uneasy. He came to the account of the meeting of the Convention, where the Committee of Public Safety reported on his own petition, and resolved to proceed with the order of the day, that is to say, to take no account of it. He read the decision. This line was his death-stroke. He went on reading in the same tone without feeling, or at least without showing any agitation. Having finished reading, he calmly said,

" Very well, it will be to-morrow; I have the night to set my affairs in order." After these few words he embraced the person who was nearest to him, and whom he had known for a long time. By a sort of sympathetic movement each of us embraced him in turn; he thanked us with emotion and added, " Dear comrades, you cheer my last moments; it is like the death of Socrates; but we shall not be allowed to talk philosophy together till the hemlock is brought." He had only just finished when the jailer came to seize him by the collar, and take him to the condemned cell.

CHAPTER VII.

The Advocate Lafeutrie—General La Marlière—Aide-de-camp of the Comte d'Estaing—Magic in Prison—Prisoners condemned to Death—Suicides—Le Duc du Châtelet—Removal from the Conciergerie—La Force—My Fellow-prisoners—The Native Parisian—Chambre du Conseil—Deputies in Prison—Dupont de Nemours—Francœur, Director of the Orchestra of the Opera—My Refusal of a Mission to Genoa.

At this period of the revolutionary tribunal, towards the end of 1793 and the earlier months of 1794, two classes of accused had the preference—the generals of the army, who, whether victorious or vanquished, alike lay under the absurd accusation of treason; and men of the Girondist party, who were picked up in all corners of France, as infected with the crime of Federalism, which passed for the most abominable of crimes in the eyes of persons who did not the least in the world know what the word meant. My wife had insisted on my having a consultation with the advocate Lafeutrie. I had refused, saying that to me an advocate was a piece of extravagance; because, were he a Demosthenes, he would never get me acquitted were I once brought before the tribunal. The object was not exactly to prepare my defence, but to know fully what accusations they would bring against me, so as to prevent any false moves on the part of the persons who interested themselves for me. This was especially desired by Citoyen Gatrez, and he had himself pointed out Lafeutrie, as they were very intimate, and supped together every day. I consented to make my confession to my uncle's guest. Lafeutrie wanted to know in the first place whether I was a

Federalist. I told him I was not, and gave him a dozen good reasons why such an accusation could not apply to me. He insisted, and I rehearsed to him the terms of the warrant of my arrest, in which I was termed an accomplice of Capet, his wife, and Lafayette. I added that it was possible that they might have found somewhere a letter I had written to Lafayette in the month of May, 1792, to dissuade him from coming to Paris, and in which, among other reasons for keeping away, I told him I was sure this journey would not be successful at the Tuileries. Lafeutrie was, or seemed to be, but little afraid of this letter, and we were not certain whether it had been discovered. He only suspected me of being a Royalist, and reassured me as to my unfortunate position as such; because Royalists were not the order of the day with the government committees. They were busy with the Federalists, and the tribunal still had enough of them to last for three months. "And three months hence," elegantly added the citizen for the defence, "the king or you or the ass may die."* "And yourself." "Ah! indeed," said he, "you think that a joke; but so it may well be with me." The visit of this double-dyed rascal did me good. I took comfort as I looked around me; for I really saw that the tribunal selected Federalists by preference, and only swerved from this course of prosecution in favour of generals. Two or three of these were sacrificed every decade for the sake of example, and apparently to keep up emulation in the army. The fate of these generals is a great subject for meditation, men of force and bravery who had won the grades of their promotion by prodigies of valour against the enemy, yet

* An allusion to the Eastern story of the sage who being commanded by a despot on pain of death to teach his ass to speak, demanded a year in which to do so, on the ground, as he told his friends, that in that space "the king may die, the ass may die, or I may die myself."

whom persons bearing the title of representatives of the people, had removed at will from the midst of their battalions and sent bound hand and foot to the Conciergerie, like sheep to the shambles, all allowing themselves to be taken like sheep. The most resolute of them, Lafayette and Dumouriez, had no notion save of flight; for this reason, that none had any moral courage. The ancient institutions of the monarchy were not such as to call it forth, there had not been time for further attempts; besides, this courage, the first of virtues among a free people, is not learnt in a day. We were nothing more as yet than the French of 1789, who had been much drilled into obedience, and in whom the habit of it has not been lost under a new power, and certainly a very hideous one.

Among the generals prepared for the revolutionary tribunal was a general of division named De la Marlière, who had been in command at Lille when it was attacked by the Austrian army under the orders of the Duke of Saxe Teschen. This general had been very slightly attached to the old order of things; he had held before the Revolution an office rather more ridiculous than the rest, that of Master of Monsieur's Harriers. When that prince emigrated he left his harriers in France, and their master with them. La Marlière, who was ambitious, was not among the last to become a turncoat; he had been for the Constitution in 1791, and a Republican in 1793. He was really a man of sense and of amiable character, though inclined to intrigue. But not the less was he accused of having betrayed the Republic when he was commander of Lille, and it must have been a very odd sort of treason, for the Duke of Saxe Teschen had disgracefully raised the siege and retired with loss in men and guns. In truth, the cause of this poor general was very good; he defended himself with skill and courage.

A shrewd man, if ever there was one, he managed from the depths of his prison to interest judges, juries, gendarmes, and even the turnkeys in his favour. No one doubted of his acquittal, and they were delighted. He furnished the subject of a scene of necromancy that I am going to relate, which took place at the Conciergerie, before five or six persons, where the position of Pythoness was occupied by an aide-de-camp of the Count d'Estaing. The speedy accomplishment of the prediction filled us all with dread; and the result gave us up a defenceless prey to superstitious terrors, so that the dread of the future was added to the horrors of the present; and it was a wonder that the strongest mind could hold out. And as if everything was to be curious in the fate of this poor La Marlière, his companion on the way to the scaffold was the famous Parisot, my old fellow-student in the law-courts, who had since tried several professions without making a fortune, and ended by that of editor of an aristocratic newspaper; and this led to his death, as I have before mentioned. He mounted the scaffold just as La Marlière, who was desirous of haranguing the honourable spectators, was declaring that he had always been, and would die, a Republican, and recommending his family and memory to the good people. As his discourse was lengthy, Parisot, becoming impatient, raised his voice still louder, and shrugging his shoulders, called out, "Citizens, do not listen to him; he is a liar, he is an aristocrat, and a greater one than I am." Thus my old friend Parisot, whom I had known successively as an advocate, an author of comic operas, the manager of a theatre, an actor, rich, and always cheerful, a practical philosopher, meeting by chance with a victim even in his last moment, in spite of his awful condition, discharged a shaft in his own fashion, just as if he had been at a ball at the opera.

But to return to the strange scene of necromancy that I have promised to relate.

The aide-de-camp of the Count d'Estaing had gone through a campaign in America. He was a cultivated man of polished and reserved manners. We met him and La Marlière every evening in the apartment of Bunel, a member of the Convention; but still a good man, who, during a rather long residence in the East Indies, had made some careful inquiries respecting the first traces of human knowledge. We made up a whist party, and if there was any time afterwards before we were shut up in our several dungeons, a discussion was raised on some point of metaphysics. Bailly never failed to come into our room at this precise moment every evening, and prided himself on being punctual as he used to be at the Academy. The burden of the aide-de-camp's song was that what we called possibility, was only a decree made by our ignorance, which would be infallibly transgressed by the future. Nor did examples fail him of the bounds of possibility having been much enlarged since the time of Pythagoras and Aristotle. He accused the Christian religion of having restrained the scope of the mind, and freely applauded the blows that were dealt at it. His system of religion was pantheism; he believed in an innumerable quantity of animated beings imperceptible to our senses, and held that man was still very far from the place that he might occupy in the great universe. Bunel, by way of not wasting upon commonplace thoughts the time he had spent in learning Hindostanee, or in travelling to visit pagodas, supported the aide-de-camp, and quoted authorities that we were not prepared to verify. The general remained faithful to the philosophy of his old master Voltaire. He allowed that there had been progress in some natural sciences; but less important than people thought, save that there

had been no really new flight of imagination, and it is so easy to advance on roads that have once been opened. Besides, he thought nothing more uncertain than what every age in turn had agreed to call the truth. He believed that the ideas of men received different forms in each period; but that they went round in a circle that they could not overpass. I remember that he added, "As an instance, gentlemen, you applauded the proceeding of the Bishop of Paris in abjuring his religion in the midst of the Convention and before the eyes of the universe. Very good. We are near the end of the eighteenth century, and it is very likely that none of us will see the nineteenth; but I predict that it will not expire before Frenchmen, or those who then dwell in France, behold processions of Capuchins in the streets of Paris, and the members of the Convention attending with rosaries in their hands, that is if they are allowed to be present." Bailly inclined to the other side, and to the perfectibility of human nature. "The storm that is now raging," said he, "doubtless, proves nothing, and yet will make many leaves of the forest fall. It will even tear up some trees; but it will also carry away some old corruptions, and the purified soil may bear some fruits hitherto unknown." At the end of one of these conversations General La Marlière asked the aide-de-camp, "So you believe in Mesmer, Cagliostro, and *tutti Quanti* lot?" He coldly answered, "Undoubtedly." "I should be very glad to see before my death an exhibition of a scene of clairvoyance or somnambulism." "It is not easy here, but I will do what I can."

This aide-de-camp, who was, I repeat, a man of cultivation and of good sense, took it up quite seriously, and under cover of our preparations for dinner got conveyed into the Conciergerie all the different things he required for this scene. There was no means of bringing in a

woman to be the clairvoyante; but in case of necessity, her place might be taken by a boy, if only he was no more than twelve or fourteen years old, and born under the signs of Sagittarius, Gemini, or Virgo, and above all perfectly pure. One was found; but before he was brought in the conjurer spent some time in carefully assuring himself by the examination of his baptismal register on what day he was born, and in asking him everything he had ever done. He fulfilled the required conditions; the day was appointed; the conjurer arranged the apparatus in the place where we had used to play whist, measuring the respective distances of each object with a pair of compasses, the whole scrupulously set out, and the boy was placed on his knees before the glass globe. "General," said the conjurer, "mention any fact in the past or future you would like to know." "The issue of the trial I am expecting." "General, select some other subject, I should be in despair at an unfavourable answer." "I insist, and assure you that whatever the answer may be I shall not be the least in the world afraid of it." "If that be the case I will not proceed with the exorcism, and we can resume our hands." "You make too much of it. What! beaten so soon, and really before you have begun? I very much suspected that it was all child's play." "You are determined, general? In that case I will begin."

After half an hour of rather hard exercise the exorciser and the boy were in a violent perspiration, and each of the three spectators had grown weary of the proceeding, and of the convulsions so close to him, and felt an insurmountable oppression. At last every one could see that the water was disturbed, and the lad cried out that he saw. "What?" "Two men fighting." "Who are they?" "I do not know." "Who are they?" "I do not know." And each question was accompanied by

conjurations, threats, and shouts. At last the child answered, "A national guard and an officer in a laced hat." "Who is the strongest?" "The national guard lays the officer down on the ground, and cuts off his head." The boy fell back.

We were in consternation, and the poor general, an unbeliever a moment before, trembled in all his limbs. We endeavoured to reassure him, said that the judgment as to the issue of which the question had been put had nothing to do with a struggle between a national guard and an officer. The hour for separation came, and we each carried with us to our cell some terror and regret at having been present at this miserable scene. It took place on the 20th of December; on the evening of the 21st the general received his indictment, was condemned to death on the 23rd, and executed the same day by an executioner dressed as a grenadier of the national guard. I am the only surviving witness of this scene; but I could appeal to M. Bailleul, of the Convention, who was living in the same part of the Conciergerie. He was not present at the scene of sorcery; but it was sufficiently notorious in the prison for him to remember it. I doubt the possibility of this scene having been concocted by accomplices. The aide-de-camp was a grave man, and too honourable to have permitted himself to play off a criminal joke. He had had no time nor means to train the child, who had been chosen from among five or six others. Indeed, we had been on the point of renouncing the enterprise for fear that it might get wind and be considered a conspiracy by Robespierre. There was some mystery about it, without doubt; where was it? I do not know.

If anyone had described to me this act of necromancy I should not have believed it; so my readers may be forgiven if they do not believe it. It may be supposed

that it was the subject of much discussion among persons who had nothing better to attend to, and we never came to a satisfactory conclusion. If there was nothing true in this apparatus of necromancy, it was a trick played upon La Marlière; but such a blow could not be dealt by any save a foe, and the general had about him only friends quickly gained through the force of common suffering; and then what a horrible choice of a subject! in such a place! in such circumstances! Thus, on all accounts it was most unlikely that there should have been any desire to practise upon anyone's credulity. Besides, the boy was the son of the porter at the street wicket, whose name was Langlois. All that could be known about him showed him as qualified to fulfil his part, that is to say, perfectly innocent. His father was present, and was determined to remove his son if anything improper had been required of him. The further one goes the greater is the embarrassment from the number of accomplices in the fraud, if there was one. And yet after the scene, which assumed a far more serious character upon the death of La Marlière, all our researches could not discover a trace of fraud.

A similar incident occurred during the unhappy affair of the necklace. Mademoiselle de Latour performed in it the part of the young innocent. She saw the Archangel Gabriel come down into the globe filled with water, and the archangel showed her everything that they wanted to make the credulous cardinal believe. It is easy to suppose that Cagliostro and his crew could prepare this mystification at their ease; they had all means at hand, and were not niggardly in making use of them, always excepting the perfect innocence of Mademoiselle de Latour, of which I have good reasons to doubt; and thus success was easy among a band of rogues who perfectly understood each other with the poor cardinal,

who believed in anything but his God. But in 1793, at Paris and in prison, and such a prison as the Conciergerie, nothing of the kind could reasonably be imagined. Nevertheless, I do not believe in auguries, nor in necromancy, nor divination, nor even in the Rosy Cross. The scene I have related may possibly be accounted for by very natural causes, perhaps even by very simple ones. I am only surprised at not having been able to find them out.

In spite of my endeavours to endure my stay at the Conciergerie I became daily more impatient of it. I do not suppose that in the memory of man such a horrible scene had ever taken place as that which was constantly before me. Not only did the torrents of blood that were shed disgust one with life; but at times there were horribly immoral incidents, such as humanity could never have been supposed capable of. In addition to these, suicides became daily more common within the prison. Cabanis had invented some lozenges, chiefly consisting of laudanum, so well prepared that they silently opened the way to the other world. All the prisoners who belonged to the sect of philosophers were provided with them. I kept one myself, though not much inclined to make use of it. These lozenges were furnished by another physician, Doctor Guillotin, who was not afraid to deprive his machine of subjects in order to do us a service. This poor man was a generous philanthropist, and was not wanting in skill or ability; but his life was embittered by the misery of having given his name to the instrument of death.

I pressed my wife every day to get me out of these infernal regions, where I could no longer live. I had lost my old friends one after another, that is to say those with whom I had passed a month or six weeks in prison. I did not care to contract new ties only to be severed in

a week by the blade of the guillotine; and thus I might be said to remain alone at the Conciergerie, though it was fuller than ever. A scene that disturbed the last visit that my wife paid me there greatly diminished her pleasure in these meetings. We were as usual in the lantern that formed a vestibule to all parts of the prison. Our talk was prolonged beyond measure. A husband in prison becomes a lover and lovers can never break off. All at once a man, surrounded by gendarmes, crossed the lantern on his way to the condemned cell. He stopped close to me and said, "Adieu, Beugnot!" I rose to run after him. He was hurried off, and only had time to make me a sign, which I needed not to assure me that he was lost. I returned to my wife. "Who is that?" said she; "I think I recognise him." "Of course you know him; it is the Duke du Châtelet." "Oh! I am sorry I did not wish him good night. Where is he going?" I answered, coldly, "He is going back to the part of the prison where he lives. You dined with him sometimes last year; but that is no reason why you should manifest your interest in him here. You must preserve that entirely for your own family." "You are right," said my wife, and we parted. Next day she saw in the newspapers that the Duke du Châtelet was condemned to death, and saw that his fate had been decided when he had passed her the day before. On our next interview she reproached me for having deceived her about the Duke du Châtelet. "Why not have told me the truth? you deceive me daily; you never warned me that poor Ducourneau was dead." "Indeed no, I do not deceive you; but I do not tell you all the truth, for it is too terrible. I only belong to the world during the brief moments when I see you. I pass the rest of my life in hell. Even your visits are a mixture of torment and pleasure to me; of torment when

I think that if the municipal officer, who overlooks the prison, were to meet you disguised, as you generally come, he would have you arrested, and we should both go to the scaffold next day; and I with the distracting idea that I had brought you there." "That is what my uncle tells me every day," replied my wife; "but I do not attend. I do my duty, and do not trouble myself about anything else." "But, my darling, as long as I am here this duty is too dangerous for you; obtain my removal to another prison, or do not come to this without a pass from the public accuser." My wife promised she would move heaven and earth to get me removed, and went away asking me to be patient a few days longer. She pressed me in her arms and added, sobbing, "I know that, like many others, you always have poison about you; I beg of you, for the sake of our poor little Clementine, do not make use of it unless you are condemned." I assured her I had no other intention, and she left me bathed in tears. An interview of this kind engrossed me for several days, and prevented my taking part in the scenes that passed around me; besides, I had come at last to be hardened amid these sentences or murders, which were all alike. The power of feeling and emotion is used up like any other; and I hardly attended to what would have caused me transports of indignation four months sooner.

Such was my position, when one morning I received an order to go down immediately to the office. I thought I was wanted there to receive some statements to copy for the clerk, for whom I was glad to perform such services. So I went down very quietly, but a much more serious affair awaited me there; I found Citizens Soulés and Manno, municipal officers, on an extraordinary visit to the prisons. These inspectors, on going through the journal of entries at the Conciergerie,

had discovered that I had been four months there without being examined, and without anyone having troubled himself at all about me. They asked me the reason, I had none to give them; and these two municipals interchanged some angry words about a citizen having been left in confinement for four months without examination, when the law required that he should be tried in twenty-four hours. They wondered at my patience, considered me a fool for having made no remonstrance, and assured me they should go at once to the public prosecutor's office, give him a good scolding, and enjoin him to have me examined, if not that very evening, at any rate the next day early in the morning. When I got back to my room, I saw that there was not a moment to lose. I sent message after message to my wife to tell her that if she could not get me out of the Conciergerie during the day, I should not get out of it for anything but my last journey. She instantly ran to her uncle, and fortunately found him. They went together to the municipal officer Danges, who had charge of the police of the Conciergerie, and he promised he would come during the day to order my removal. My wife told him that she would not leave him till the thing was done, and dragged him with her to the Conciergerie, while Citoyen Gatrey on his side went to the Palais de Justice to obtain the permission of the public accuser. All succeeded, and thanks to the energetic activity of my wife, I that day doubled the most dangerous cape I ever encountered on my perilous journey. Re-called to the office at six o'clock in the evening, I found Citizen Danges there, and he signed my order of removal, and told me that my wife would only leave him at the wicket, and did not wait for him there, for she had hurried to the prison of La Force to select my room there. I burned to go and take possession of it. I could not

go up to my room again to pack up the few things I possessed as a prisoner, and I let the clerk take his choice, whether to send me all I had or nothing at all. But there was another difficulty that delayed my departure; there were only private gendarmes to be found available for taking me to La Force, and the clerk would not trust me to any but an officer, in order to spare me the humiliation of being tightly bound and dragged at a horse's tail. The officer was not bound down to employ such harsh methods; he could use a carriage and let the escort march alongside. So we waited—I with mortal impatience. He came at last; but the difficulty now arose from another quarter. The gendarmes were not there, and the hour for closing approached. I thought I should be lost if I had to pass the night at the Conciergerie. I begged the officer to take me out, and passed my word to him to follow him wherever he chose to take me. He allowed himself to be prevailed on, and sent for a carriage. Half an hour went by without any carriage coming. I saw the preparations for closing being made. I was seized with despair, and redoubled my entreaties to the officer, while he told me it would be impossible for me to walk, because having been shut up so long, I should be affected by the fresh air. I denied this, and my words were so piteous that at last the officer took me out through the wicket. But what he had predicted really occurred. I was so overpowered by the external air that I could not move, and was obliged to sit down on the first boundary stone on the level of the Palace yard. The officer proposed to me to go in for a few minutes; the very notion of it made me cry out with horror. I summoned up all my strength, and with the assistance of the officer's arm I dragged myself as far as the Palace guard-room, where he left me while he returned to the Conciergerie to fetch the carriage. The guard-room was occupied by the National

Guard of these days; that is to say, by men in rags, with red caps and armed with pikes. They paid but little attention to the orders of the officer to keep me in sight. A prisoner more or less was then such an indifferent matter, that my guardians did not pay any attention to it. The guard-room was dim with tobacco smoke; the chief part of the honourable company were drunk, the others were hard at work in following their example, so that no one would have thought of stopping me if I had had either the power or will to escape; but I had neither. At last, to my delight, I heard the carriage coming, and got into it for my journey to the prison of La Force. On the way I poured out a great many excuses and thanks to the officer of the gendarmerie; but I told him that at the last place he had trusted me to very careless guards, and that any one else would have easily escaped. The officer agreed, but added that he was a good physiognomist, and besides having been informed by the clerk of the cause of my arrest, he had entirely relied on my word. Besides, this officer, a native of Nancy, had served in the army of the princes the year before, and had got out of the scrape through the credit of an uncle, who was a deputy in the Convention. So strange was the confusion of society, or that which passed for society.

We arrived at La Force. The portress, Citoyenne Lebau, was naturally a kind woman, and not hardened by her office, besides she had been assisted by, and had been under obligations to Gatrey, on more than one occasion. So I was charmingly received there; she made me come into her room to await my wife, who lived opposite, and whom she went to call. It was so much sudden happiness that I pinched myself to see whether I was really awake. My wife hurried in; the scene was ecstasy on both sides; we should only have the street between us,

and should see one another nearly whenever we pleased. The remainder of the captivity I had to endure, was nothing in comparison with the peril that I had just escaped. I no longer feared for my life, and I repeated a thousand times to my wife that I owed it to her alone that I was alive. She said she was still happier than I was, but that after all she had only done her duty, and that any other person in her place would have done as much. We parted. I had to cross the great court of La Force to get to the room where I was to lodge. It was one of those fine nights in January, when the blue of the sky is clear, and the stars shine with their full brightness. For four months I had lived under vaults of stone, almost without the light of day. The first sight of the firmament threw me into an ecstasy such as that in which Milton depicts the father of the human race when for the first time he perceived the magnificent spectacle around him. I begged the jailer, who went with me, to allow me some time in the yard. I walked about it in all directions; to see, to walk, to breathe, were so many enjoyments to me; and the jailer reported to Madame Lebau, that evening, that the tall prisoner was mad, and ought rather to be at Charenton than at La Force. Next morning the good woman sent for me, and inquired with visible uneasiness about my health, and as to how I had passed the night, and I heard from her afterwards that it was my mental health that had caused her anxiety.

The room that I was to occupy was a very good one for a prison; it was meant for four persons. At the Conciergerie it would have contained twice as many. My three comrades in it were, a former counsellor to the Parliament of Paris, named de Saint Roman, the actor Neuville (husband of La Montansier) and the famous lawyer Linguet. Monsieur Roman, though he had been

a counsellor in the first of sovereign Courts, was an amusing original. He had a basket at the side of his table to hold his papers, and he daily threw into it small sheets of paper carefully written and folded. As long as I did not know him, I thought he was composing some dictionary, remembering that Ducange had composed his in this manner. Nothing of the sort; these sheets contained the detail of his dinner, and the number of glasses of wine and of water he had drunk. This good man had arrived at the age of fifty years without ever having taken any journey except from Paris to his family country house about five miles from the capital. The removal of the Parliament to Troyes, in 1787, had compelled him to travel a hundred and twenty miles there and back again; and his tales of what he had seen and felt during the journey never ceased. Though I had taken the same journey, perhaps a hundred times myself, I was never weary of hearing the marvels from the counsellor's mouth. He was credulous even to simplicity, and told us as facts the cock and bull stories of his porteress. Though well up on the subject of ghosts and conjurers, he had never in his life opened a law-book, and could not spell a word correctly. They executed this poor man, and what good did it do them, I should like to know?

Neuville had been created and sent into the world to act tragedy, and if he had not one day been called on to act it too seriously, he would have been selected to console France for the loss of Lekain, for he was a hundred times better than Larive. His face was expressive, he had a good voice, a superior understanding, and majestic air. A disciple of the school of Clairon, he spoke of ordinary matters of life in the tone in which he would have declaimed the part of Rhadamistes. After a fortunate *début* in Paris, he went to perfect himself in the country, and held the first place among the actors at

Rouen. One day he had the part of Don Juan in the "Festin de Pierre," his hair-dresser had kept him waiting, the play was late, and the pit furious. At last the hair-dresser came, and Don Juan, faithful to his character, ran his sword through his body and killed him on the spot. The proceeding was entirely in the spirit of his part, but the Law Court of Rouen did not forgive Neuville this slight variation from Corneille's piece, and condemned him to death. He got a pardon, but could never obtain permission to act in Paris. Afterwards, he married La Montansier, and became by his marriage, sometimes an actor, sometimes a manager in a provincial troop, and always a very humble servant of his lady wife; and thus he did not pay any more attention to the serious studies that might have raised him to the highest rank. He had just built the Opera House in the Rue de Richelieu. It was said to be with the money that Danton and Lacroix had gained by their journey to Belgium; it was not fully proved, but till more should be known about it, Robespierre had taken upon himself to provide for Neuville, and had sent him to La Force. It is even supposed that it was the beginning of the hostilities between Danton and his savage rival.

I met the Advocate Linguet with a mixture of curiosity and respect. There were many recollections of great interest connected with this name; he possessed oratorical talent of the first order, an original writer formidable to Governments as well as to private persons, persecuted in turns by the Society of Advocates, by the Parliament, by Ministers, both French and foreign, his life had been one long storm. I expected to find a sort of Marius sitting on the ruins of Carthage; I only found a morose old man, on bad terms with himself, and unbearable to others. It only took me a few days to understand perfectly, the aversion he excited when he

was in contact with his equals in business or society. When I came to the room he had reduced Saint-Roman to a kind of domestication, but he had not gained such an easy victory over the comedian as over the counsellor, and a quarrel was raging between him and Orosmanes. I tried to keep neutral, but it was impossible; I was obliged to take one side or the other, and I declared against Linguet, for his conduct was unreasonable on all points. From that time he turned upon me as an inveterate enemy, and tried to do me a bad turn. I escaped through the protection of Citoyenne Lebau, who removed me from the cave of discord, and put me into the Council Chamber, the best, the most habitable, and inhabited by the best people in the prison.

This chamber contained twelve boarders, and was remarkable for the politeness and good breeding that reigned in it. The foundation of the society, of the mess if you please, was composed of very ancient and very honourable bourgeois of Paris, who had been employed in the capital in occupations suited for their class, rate-payers of the Hôtel de Ville, tax-collectors, magistrates of the Châtelet, &c. The native Parisian has a peculiar character that may be expressed by the epithet *cockney;* he is attached to his religion, to his king, to his relations, to old customs; credulous, easily amused, and as easily abused. The circle of his acquaintance rarely extends beyond the boundaries of the capital, and he seriously believes that all the wonders of the world are collected there. This race of men was persecuted and decimated by the Revolution; it had grown up during a long period of rest, beneath the shadow of a Government that seemed to be everlasting; it is at an end, and will never be reproduced. Political adventurers, or schemers, now invade the old houses of the Marais, whose peaceful generations succeeded each other, and in

the island of Saint Louis, where no revolutions were known but those that winter sometimes caused in the course of the Seine.

The company in the Council Chamber was composed of dwellers in these two quarters; so all prisoners were not admitted there indifferently, and by a scandalous practice, that however really did not last very long, they balloted for those who presented themselves; and in spite of all the influence of Citoyenne Lebau and our eager prayers they disdainfully repulsed poor Neuville because he had been on the boards; an exclusiveness very curious at the time and the place. It is true this chamber had some enviable privileges, the provisions were excellent, indeed one of the most renowned cooks in Paris had established himself opposite to the prison to work for this one apartment, and this *artiste*, a zealous aristocrat, beat up every corner of Paris to lay hands on delicacies on our behoof. The greater number of the inhabitants of the chamber, having in their cellars those wines which only improve by being forgotten, dug them out for the occasion, and graciously did the honours to such as like myself had no such resource. In the afternoon the chamber was furnished with whist tables, picquet, and chess, which employed the time of those who had no occupation, and so calm was our life compared with that without, that one citizen, Mercier de la Source, a foster-brother of Louis XV., an old man of eighty, and the handsomest old man I ever saw, repeated to us, "If they wanted to set me at liberty, I should respectfully beg of the gentlemen to leave me here. Nowhere shall I find better company, nor as much attention as in your society."

Good manners and orderliness were the rule in the chamber. We made it a regulation to dress for dinner every day, neither better nor worse in our prison than

if we were at liberty; but among the main body of us there were few conversational resources. I hardly found any one with whom to talk except Duquesnoy of the Constitutional Assembly, and Foissey who had been my colleague in the Legislative Assembly, both of them highly educated persons, and the first an amiable man full of wit. I had been intimate with him before we were brought together by our common danger, and as we now became better acquainted, these connections had become a close friendship. He had a beautiful and virtuous wife who had come to her husband's assistance as mine had done. These two wives, both young, lived together at the Hôtel d'Espagne. They had been born and married in the same years and the positions of their husbands were perfectly similar. Thus they lived upon the same hopes and fears, they shared some brief moments of joy and long intervals of suffering. All this was scarcely needed to unite them very closely, even if a natural sympathy had not drawn them together. Every day they wrote to us and we never failed to reply. Our day began by this charming duty. Afterwards we considered that it would not do to lose this portion of our lives entirely in idleness, and that study would be the best employment for our time whatever might happen to us. Duquesnoy resumed the study of German, which he spoke a little as a matter of course like everyone from the Messin, and I returned to my English. Then we laboured to clear up some points of history that we thought obscure. Such of our friends as were not imprisoned placed their libraries at our disposal, making it their business to send us books; nor can I omit to mention the particular favours conferred on us in that point by our honest friend Dussault, the translator of Juvenal and our comrade in prison. When he knew what question we were engaged on, he would

himself look out the works that we wanted, and took all possible pains to procure them from his own library or those of his friends.

The prison of La Force had received forty out of the seventy-three Deputies whom the Convention had caused to be arrested for having entered their protest against the day of the 31st of May, and among them were some persons of merit. Dussault, whom I have just mentioned, was one of those men who by their very presence are a justification to the party they have embraced; Mercier, the author of "Tableaux de Paris" and many other works whose originality of thought sometimes resembles genius; Aubry, a soldier learned in all the knowledge that bears on the art of war; Daunon, already admirable for the extent of his information, and who never subtracted half-an-hour from his studies even when on a journey; the architect Ledoux, so well-known for the fertility and curiosity of his fancy; Latouche, the famous chancellor of the Duke of Orléans, who experienced some amount of suspicion in the prison, and who was no stranger to the governing and overwhelming party though a prisoner himself. Among the personages I have mentioned, or others whom I might put on the same level, we found resources against the complete insufficiency of the Council Chamber for all that appertained to mental enjoyment.

A treasure awaited us in Dupont de Nemours, who at last suffered the general fate and came to take his place at La Force. I had been acquainted with him long before, and no one could know the man without loving him. He had heard of my arrest and confinement in La Force from a friend of my wife's, and had written her such a letter as he alone could write. Himself arrested at Saint Maur les Fossés and brought to Paris, he had begged to be taken to the same prison

as myself, and had some difficulty in obtaining his request. I thought when I saw him come in that he had come to pay me a visit, and I flung myself on his neck to show him how much I was affected by it. "I did really come in search of you, my dear Darès," cried Dupont, "but it was like you, justly or unjustly arrested. I came here like a conscript to join his regiment, will you take care of my education?" It was not difficult, for no man bore misfortune, I will not say so courageously, for courage implies an effort, but with such perfect equanimity, which he only interrupted for a moment by some gay or witty sally. His arrival among us was a public benefit; he seemed to multiply himself in order to distribute all around words of patience and hope, and he was sure to be found where there was any good to be done that was within his power. It will be supposed that he did not lose this good chance of preaching economical science. He opened his school; from morning to night he was engaged in speaking or writing, and as every one heard him with interest or read his writings with delight, it seemed that science had no loss in the enforced retirement imposed alike on master and scholars. This remarkable man dreamed from night till morning of the good of his kind, and showed his anxiety for it in the smallest details. I was one day walking with him in the yard of La Force, and we were sorrowfully inquiring into the issue of what we we had before us. He saw a peach-stone on the pavement before us, stooped and picked it up, selected a good position with a southerly aspect, made a hole of the proper depth with his knife, and planted the stone. I could not help laughing when I saw him at work. But Dupont said, "You are laughing at me, my dear Darès; remember that when I saw the stone you were just saying to me that we had revolution upon us for

perhaps half a century. Well, my friend, the stone will have time to grow and become a handsome peach-tree, and how can any one tell?—may be in ten, twenty, or thirty years some poor wretches, held captive as we are by the eternal right of power, may see my peach-tree and admire its beautiful flowers and fruit. They will find some comfort at sight of one of the most charming productions of the neighbourhood of Paris, and I rejoice in the idea that they will be obliged to me; and, as you see, it has cost me very little."

As soon as the Citoyennes Duquesnoy and Beugnot knew that Dupont had been unfortunate enough to be arrested, but that we were so happy as to have him among us, they desired us to invite them to dinner. It was quite a new pleasure to the Council Chamber to invite ladies to dine with them. The bill of fare was but slightly changed; our dress was not made more sumptuous, but they were charmed with the arrangement of the meal and the way in which the honours of it were performed. After dinner they made up a whist table and left us not inclined to think our state much to be pitied provided our captivity did not become more severe.

Francœur, the conductor of the orchestra at the Opera, was one of our party; when he saw Madame Beugnot enter he was struck dumb at her resemblance to Saint-Huberti. Indeed it is hard for two women to be so much alike; the same features, the same elegant figure, the same splendid fair hair, and especially an expression mobile and full of animation. Poor Francœur, he had supposed his musical throne no less firm by inheritance than that of the Bourbons, but yet he too had been hurled from it and cast into prison. He was accused of having maliciously placed obstacles in the way of the production of an opera on the subject of the "Passion of Our Lord." We were curious to know how a subject had been treated

by impiety on which the pious simplicity of our fathers had been more than once exercised. Francœur sent for the manuscript. The opera was in three acts; the accusation, the judgment, the execution. The last terrible scene of Golgotha was complete. It was impossible to avoid being agitated by it, so true it is that religious faiths might be among us, as among the Greeks, the most powerful resources of the dramatic art. The committees of government did not agree as to the suitability of the representation. Fabre d' Eglantine had taken some share in the poem, and that was enough to make Collot d'Herbois, his rival in more matters than one, averse to it, and until these powers should come to an agreement, Francœur, who had only testified repugnance to its production out of respect for decorum, had been sent to La Force.

Our condition continued such as I have described it during the months of Nivôse, Ventôse, and Pluviôse. No one was taken from La Force to be brought before the revolutionary tribunal; we fancied we were out of the scope of the great storm. The government only appeared to see in the occupants of La Force a little nest of the suspected; that is to say, poor insignificant wretches who could be attended to in the absence of anything more pressing. What would be our fate? It was not easy to conjecture; but the family of the suspected, thanks to the learned definitions of Merlin of Douai, was too numerous to be led to the scaffold, or even to be transported. They would be got rid of in the course of time. An exception had already been admitted in the case of the arrested husbandmen, by which the Duke de Mazarin had profited under the name of Jacques Aumont; to-morrow one would be introduced for the cordwainers, and the Duke de Nevers would benefit by it under the name of Jean Mazarin.

One way or another, if they could not put us to death they would be obliged to remove us from hence, since we could not remain here till eternity.

Study, pleasant conversation, continual contact with educated and well-trained men, rendered our seclusion preferable to anything we should have found in what was then society. But towards the end of Ventôse the horizon suddenly darkened; Danton, in whom lay our hopes of safety, was arrested with his party, and brought before the revolutionary tribunal on the futile accusation of conspiracy. Perhaps this accusation was not entirely unfounded, and this is what makes me think so: though Danton and I were at the extremes of opposite parties, he had always been friendly towards me. At the end of the Constitutional Assembly, after the mournful executions in the Champ de Mars, there had been a decree that a writ should be issued against him. The decree had been addressed to me as syndic attorney-general of the department of the Aube to be put in force, and I had at the same moment received information that Danton would be at Arcis, at the house of a merchant named Sannet, or at Troyes with the advocate-general Milard. He had really taken refuge with the latter; and, knowing this, I caused him to be informed that he might be easy, and that I would not have him arrested. The amnesty soon arrived. When I came to Paris as a deputy of my division, Danton sought me out and desired to enroll me in his party. I dined with him three times in the Board of Trade, and came away each time terrified at his designs and his vehemence. I had quietly detached myself from him after a conversation in which he had displayed his designs to me, and the not very enticing share in them which he destined for me in it. We ceased to meet without having quarrelled. He was contented with saying about me to Courtois, his friend

and my colleague, "Your great Beugnot is nothing but a devotee, there is nothing to be made of him." However, I met him sometimes at Courtois' house when he treated me to the rough familiarity which he reserved for his friends. In one of these meetings in the month of April, 1793, he told me that I ought to leave Paris, and even France if I could without being made an *émigré*, because the land was getting too hot for me and such as me. He offered to help me to do so, and indeed obtained for me from Lebrun, the minister for foreign affairs and his *protégé*, the mission to Genoa, which, however, I decided on refusing, though it would have placed me in security during the continuance of the Reign of Terror.

The object of this mission was to facilitate the importation of corn in France by the Mediterranean, and seeing nothing political in it I at first accepted it. I was busy about the preparations for my departure for several days, when chancing to cross the Rue de la Madeleine I remembered that there lived in that street an old friend of my father's who had been employed on several missions such as that I had just accepted. I thought I might profit by his experience; and I went to see him. Des Fermes, the old official, received me with open arms, praised me for my conduct at the Assembly, and expressed himself truly and forcibly on the disgrace of the times in which it was our misfortune to live. Our conversation was long and animated, and yet concluded without my daring to say a single word about my mission. When I had gone away I began to reflect alone on what had just taken place, and to question myself. I had feared to wound a good man to the heart, a man in whom my father had perfect confidence, by revealing to him that I had had the weakness to ally myself with persons whom I detested as much as he

did. If I felt shame before him, another time it would be so with some one else. Could I then be in the path of duty, whence I had resolved never to deviate? I must say the contest was not long, and in an hour's time I was with Danton and told him of my refusal. "Since such is your opinion," said he, "you are right; but, bethink yourself, that I shall not be able to protect you much longer. You see how we proceed in the Convention, people of your sort will serve only as the stake of the losing party in the game. As you will neither throw yourself into the mêlée nor go away, get yourself forgotten if you can." I fully intended to have followed his advice, with what consequences has been shown.

When Danton heard, six months afterwards, that I was arrested, he stamped his foot, crying out, "The wretch! Why would he not go to Genoa?" He it was who, not knowing in what prison I was confined, caused an order to be sent to them all, by Parey, the Minister of the Interior, that I should be treated with all the consideration compatible with the rules of the house. Only sixteen days before his arrest, he had come to La Force to see Citoyenne Lebau, who owed her situation to him; and said in course of conversation, "Have not you got Citoyen Beugnot here?" The portress answered in the affirmative, and even asked whether she should call me. Danton refused to see me, but added, "Recollect this: if, as is possible, another attack on your prison should take place, or some great disturbance, call Beugnot down and shut him up in your kitchen; then when you have an opportunity, give him means to escape." This was told me by Citoyenne Lebau the day after the fall of Robespierre. I may add that if Danton met Citoyen Gatrey anywhere, he never failed to ask after me, and to advise me to keep as much as possible out of sight. He added "We will get him out

of the business. His time is coming, but is not yet come. I was not the only one in the prison who looked to that quarter for rescue, either because it was the general belief that Danton was the only man who could overturn Robespierre, or because the former was in communication with persons who were under arrest, as I could readily believe. However, so it was; and after the death of Danton the rules of the prison of La Force were entirely changed. The members of the community who had taken the superintendence of that house for several months in succession were sent to the scaffold, and replaced by individuals of unparalleled brutality. We could not so much as think of having our wives to dinner; our interviews with them were subject to a host of impediments; they could hardly take place above once a week, and then were short, and under the perpetual fear of being observed by the municipal officer. This was restoring order to the place.

We had to thank Trial for it—an actor of the Comic Opera who thought himself at least a Roman consul under his tri-coloured scarf, and afforded us original farces, quite unawares to himself, though, as if to put a finish to our misery, we did not dare to laugh at them. Trial's colleague was a shoemaker of Saint Martin-des-Champs, named Vassot. The former undoubtedly bore the palm of eloquence, but the latter was a deeper thinker. He applied the full power of his brain to defend equality from the attacks daily made on it before his eyes, and, consequently, was indignant at the good cheer kept in the council-chamber, as compared with the more moderate repasts to which the poorer prisoners were condemned, since if it was possible for any one to be at once a patriot and a prisoner, it was quite certain that patriots would be found among the poor. So he introduced into the prison the rule of a common table, where

every person should take his seat without distinction. The price of the ordinary was fixed at forty sous a meal, and amongst every twenty guests three gratuitous places were reserved for poor prisoners who should be appointed by the magistrate of the Commune. There was one only kitchen established in the prison, and Heaven knows what the contractor could furnish at this time for forty sous in assignats per head, when he had deducted the gratuitous places, and likewise those that the author of this sublime project had retained for himself and his accomplices, the principal agents in the execution. What did it matter? We had to tear ourselves from the charms of the dinner in the council-chamber, to sit down to an untidy table, and in a disgusting intermixture—for we were placed in alphabetical order. The very smell of the meat was unendurable, and it was quite impossible to eat, at any rate to us; but among our equals there were some stomachs of iron, and teeth of steel, by whom everything we rejected was instantly devoured. To add to our delight, the municipal officer, Vassot, often granted us the favour of his company at this banquet; always with the same compliment, "Well, citizens, how goes it? Is your appetite good?" "Yes, citizen municipal, but the soup is bad." "Oh, indeed! The fact is that one must not be dainty, you see; there are a devil of a lot of patriots that would be precious glad to have their share."

The epicurean guests of the council-chamber were in despair. Dupont de Nemours alone considered the invention somewhat amusing, and could not imagine why reasonable men could find it a matter of vexation. "Indeed, my dear Beugnot," said he, "you ought to be charmed at this general table. Why, only yesterday you were defending your tiresome Mably and wearisome Lycurgus against me; well, what you are angry about

to-day is just like Lycurgus, only more dainty. Have patience; some other friend of equality will come to us more easy-going than Citizen Vassot. He would recommend thieving in the prisons, provided the thief were not caught in the fact. Now you can only see your young and loving wife by stealth, and not so much as you would like. The current money is so depreciated that it will soon be necessary, as I have predicted, to drag about a whole pile of assignats to pay for a pair of slippers. Don't you know that this is one step towards that constitution of Lycurgus that you admire so heartily? We have no helots; but we labour from morning to night to make them, and the material is ready."

CHAPTER VIII.

The First Victim from La Force—Ex-Comte de Ferrières—Sauvebœuf—Young Fashionables in La Force—Counsellor Leconteulx de la Noraye—Results of his Inconsiderate Denunciation—The Lesconteulx transferred to the Evêché—Illness of Madame Beugnot—L'Abbé de Périgord—The Comte de Brienne—Condemnation of Madame Elizabeth—Increased Activity of the Revolutionary Tribunal—The Tocsin—A Friend of Robespierre—Death of Robespierre—Restored to Liberty.

Up to this time we had had nothing to contend with but the tedium of prison life; but anxiety soon resumed its full sway, when we saw that it had come to the turn of La Force to furnish its contingent to the Revolutionary Tribunal. The unhappy Linguet was the earliest victim. At first no great numbers were taken, and we saw that they were selected with such discernment that there must be some one among us who had the office of selection. We were convinced that this miserable office was really filled by an ex-Count de Ferrières Sauvebœuf. He was the younger son of a very ancient family at Limoges. I had long known him; for his eldest brother, the Marquis de Sauvebœuf, had taken up his abode nine miles from the town where I was born, and had married the rich heiress of the Abbé de Dinteville. Ferrières was nearly as ugly as Danton, and of the same Herculean form; and to this he united ability, audacity, unbridled passions, and the most perfect indifference as to the means of gratifying them. He was one of those men whom those in power always have at their disposal, to

do all the evil that they desire. He would have assassinated the Duke of Guise at Blois, without making any difficulty; but he would not have recoiled in the least at the Cardinal's red robes. He made a rather long tour in the Levant, whether he were only impelled by the spirit of adventure, or whether he had to fulfil a kind of mission there that it was undesirable to entrust to Count Choiseul Gouffier, who was then our ambassador there. When he came back, he published a book on the Levant which obtained some success. The public were not so well informed as they are now of what goes on in that part of Europe, and besides, he censured the line of politics we were then pursuing—and this was enough for success. Then he exerted himself to get appointed ambassador to Persia; but he met with more than one sort of obstacle, and employed the three years that preceded the Revolution in intrigues more or less foul. It had been more than once proposed to the Count de Montmorin to send him to the Bastille, and no one, according to the jurisprudence of the time, could have better deserved it; but the Minister did not venture—for his natural timidity was increased by circumstances. The Revolution came: Ferrières managed to attach himself to the Diplomatic Committee, by the favour of Mirabeau, who said of him that he was a knave that something might be made of. He was soon at variance with his illustrious protector, who was himself at the trouble of turning him out of the committee-room. It was in the nature of Ferrières to descend every step on the ladder of revolution. Thus he was to be found again among the Jacobins, the Cordeliers, constantly among the worst; and, after the 31st of May, he was, or pretended that he was, sent as third, by the Committees of Government, with Poterat, the old diplomatic agent, and a member of the Convention, to arrange some in-

trigue or another with Prussia, the locality of which was Bâle.*

Ferrières complained that he had been deprived of all the glory of the business—if glory there were. The committees, in order to get rid of him, or to silence him, sent him to La Force. He had been a prisoner from the first, and apparently feared or hoped to remain where he was for a long time; for he chose a small set of two rooms on the first floor, very commodious for such a place, and fitted them up with Oriental luxury. There was a divan round the bed-room, and there, lolling at full length, he passed his life in smoking, in Eastern fashion, with a magnificent pipe, the last remains of his diplomatic splendour. He had around him those pretty, agreeable, and convenient trifles that opulence delights in, and, better than that, nightingales, brought up and kept with the greatest care, which kept up an incessant spring-like song in the prison of Paris. The first room contained a collection of our most agreeable authors recently published in duodecimo by Cazin and Diderot, and several portfolios of prints. His dinner was prepared in Madame Lebau's own kitchen, by a cook at his orders, who sent him up the most delicate dishes that could be procured. He laughed at the common table, and commiserated me and Duquesnoy for being both reduced to this disgusting *régime*. He proposed to us to appear there for form's sake, and to dine with him every day. One day we allowed ourselves to be persuaded, and a dinner was sent up, such as to scare us by its luxury. Warned by this experience, we promised ourselves faith-

* The details of this curious intrigue, proving that the Committee of Public Safety, or rather Robespierre, had flattered themselves with the notion of inducing the court of Prussia to enter into negotiations with the Republic, is to be found in the second volume of "Memoirs extracted from the Papers of a Statesman." The first two volumes of this work contain many valuable revelations on the secret history of the Revolution.

fully not to get into any scrape with Ferrières, but also not to become intimate with him, because both courses might be dangerous. We learned afterwards that he went out of the prison almost every day, not returning till very late, and that sometimes a turnkey had to sit up half the night waiting for him. So there could no longer be any doubt that he communicated frequently with the Committees of Government, and that he was their agent in the prison of La Force. An incident that I shall have immediate occasion to relate completely proved it. After all, he applied some conscience—if such a term may be used—or rather discernment, to this infamous calling. The first levy made at La Force took off five subordinate blackguards, universal knaves, indifferent alike to any God, such as derive from a revolution only such relaxation of authority as renders easier the exercise of the art of living at the expense of others. These men were just as innocent of the crime of opposition to the Revolution as honest men; but they really had in their way misused the Revolution. Such a judicious choice struck the minds of all, and it was agreed that there would have been nothing in it to be called in question if these wretches had been sent to the Bicêtre instead of to the scaffold. At the same time the forty deputies of the Convention were removed from La Force to join their comrades at the prison of the Madelonnettes. It was nearly certain that they would never be called up for trial, and for that reason they had been placed in La Force. Their departure was an additional reason for us to suppose that the kind of immunity that we had hitherto seemed to enjoy was come to an end.

A new levy succeeded the first, and the selection for this went higher: some of the young fops were chosen, generally well born, whom the horrors of the Revolution had not been able to tear away from the delights of Capua,

and who had been lost among the delights of Paris while their relations were dying of famine in Condé's army; they had been senseless enough to believe that the Revolution would let them alone because they had mounted its costume and borrowed its language. The drawing-room of Madame de Sainte Amaranthe was their daily place of meeting, and there they still preserved the sacred fire, in spite of a by-favour of travestie. The Revolution made a sign, Madame de Sainte Amaranthe and her charming daughter were sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and all the dandies that had graced their drawing-room were picked out of the prisons of Paris to form their escort. La Force furnished eight unfortunates for this immolation, one of the most cruel furnished by these annals of blood, and the very populace seemed sorry for it. This second list was attributed to the same person as the former. Perhaps the idea was not wrong. Some time afterwards I had an irrefragable proof.

We had in our council-chamber Counsellor Leconteulx de la Noraye, who had come in for a share, with his brother and cousins, of the very fine fortune gained by the Leconteulx who was called "Don Louis," the only one who had any genius among all who have borne the name. La Noraye set up to be somebody, though he had only received for his share just as much sense as is required not to be a fool. Emboldened by the example of M. Necker, before the Revolution he had dreamed of becoming Controller-General; he got together pamphlets from all quarters, and gave them to M. de Vergennes, Archbishop of Sens, as his own; he even did the latter the service to introduce to him his friend Le Normand, who could not find a single sou to provide for the expenses of the last six months of 1788, and thus accelerated that Minister's fall. All the intrigues of La Noraye, before and during the Revolution, ended in his being

named Member of the General Council of the Department of Seine and Oise, and in getting turned out and shut up in the council-chamber at La Force. There again he established himself on the footing of factotum, took the details into his own hands, and managed them with the greatest satisfaction. Like every one else, I let him go his own way. I even let him tell me that if the Archbishop of Sens had listened to him he would still be first Minister, and he, La Noraye, Comptroller-General. However, by malice, or rather, perhaps, folly, La Noraye played me a wicked trick at the time I mention. From the beginning of Germinal the Government had paid forty sous a day to each person detained under suspicion in the prisons of Paris. The real object of this remuneration was a plan to transport all the suspected persons, and to sequestrate their goods from that date. Notwithstanding, Duquesnoy and I were most deeply interested in always receiving the forty sous a day, since that kept us in the list of the suspected; as otherwise we must have been sent back to the Conciergerie. The clerk of the prison, who was devoted to us, had willingly lent himself to the fraud. So we got the money during the months Germinal and Floréal. The next month it was refused. I went to the office to hear the reason; the clerk told me that it had been Citoyen La Noraye who had come and told him that he was compromising himself very much by placing Duquesnoy and me in the list of suspected persons, for we were neither more nor less than summoned to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and ought to be at the Conciergerie. The clerk told me, "You know Citoyen La Noraye and all his imprudence; what he told me he will repeat to the first municipal officer who visits the prison, and will not fail to add that he has warned me. I may lose my place for it; and you know, in these days, it is not only one's

place that is lost, but one's head." He showed me the list he had prepared for the month Prairial: neither my name nor that of Duquesnoy appeared in that of the suspected. After the suspected came the names of the condemned; then, lastly, those of the accused, and we figured among them. I did all I could by insisting, praying, conjuring him, but could get nothing. I carried my sorrows to Duquesnoy, who was equally interested: he had more influence over the clerk than I, for he was his fellow-countryman, and he prevailed on him that our names should not appear among the suspected, nor in any other place, but be erased from the list. Duquesnoy announced this unhoped-for victory to me, and urged me to an absolute silence towards La Noraye. I promised to do all I could. When I left him, I went into the council-chamber. It was a fine summer day, and all the prisoners were walking in the yard. I only found La Noraye asleep in a chair; he awoke at my entrance, and we were *tête-à-tête*. I wanted to go; he stopped me, and began a conversation in spite of me; he blamed me for leaving on him the whole burden of the business of the room, and pressed me to unite with him in order to put an end to the common table, our daily infliction. I replied to him that I did not care about it, for a reason that he very well knew; that I ought not to be classed among the suspected, since I was only at La Force by stratagem, and that my place was at the Conciergerie, in the hands of the Revolutionary Tribunal, to which I had been summoned. La Noraye considered mine a fair excuse, but he pointed out that I should endure the misery of the common table as long as I remained at La Force. I answered that my stay would not be long if his denunciation to Richelot, the clerk, took effect. La Noraye answered, "I did not intend to make a denunciation, but to give a bit of advice to Richelot, in whom I take an interest, and who is a relation of my

friend Gougeon, syndic advocate of the department of Seine and Oise." I answered that I cared as little for his friendship with Gougeon as for the latter's relationship to Richelot: that if he did not understand that he was making a denunciation against Duquesnoy and myself he was a dangerous lunatic, and that if I was not disarmed by pity I would box his ears at once. At these words he took up some of the fire-irons from the grate to defend himself, and advanced upon me with a sufficiently determined air. I seized the arm that bore his weapon with one hand, and I gave him such a violent blow with the other hand open, that he fell back, stunned, on his chair, and bleeding at the nose. I ran hastily downstairs after this fine performance, and went to lose myself among all the promenaders. It came to time for returning to our rooms, and I went up in great embarrassment as to what figure I was going to cut there. Nobody said a word to me. Duquesnoy looked at me with an air of consternation, and shrugged his shoulders. La Noraye was in bed, and there were three or four persons round him, who seemed to be occupied with him. I saw that I had been unanimously condemned. I requested to be allowed a word of explanation: no one answered or even looked at me. In spite of such a marked prejudice, I began to speak, and told the facts as I have just related them. When I avowed that I had undoubtedly exceeded the defensive attitude, and struck M. de la Noraye with my open hand, he rose up into a sitting posture and cried out in a voice of thunder, "It is not true! It is not true! He did not strike with his open hand." I accepted the negation, and confessed that it relieved my mind from a heavy weight, and I declared that I had nothing more to say. Everyone looked about in astonishment. Willeminot, the most intimate friend of La Noraye in the room, said to him, "What, my poor friend, have you

gone mad?" "No, no," answered La Noraye; "I know very well what I am saying. I repeat that it was not with his open hand, but with his closed fist that Citizen Beugnot struck me right in the face, and that made my nose bleed instantly." I accepted the latter version. I had no right to be fastidious; but see the intricate folds of human folly! The gravity of my insult was very much diminished in the eyes of the honourable spectators by the colour that La Noraye persisted in giving to it. It ceased to be a mortal affront: one had made menaces with an iron bar; the other protected himself by a blow with his fist: and then La Noraye's conduct was not fair; he was a man who meddled with what did not belong to him; he was managing in the prison from morning till night, and what for? What a fine piece of work to expose two comrades to the scaffold to save the Republic a few pence! Before the candles in the room were put out, my comrades thought there was a great deal of excuse for me, and poor La Noraye got nothing but his blow with the hand or fist, and all the disgrace, whichever it might be.

Some days passed. We had tried to hush up the matter among ourselves; but what passes among twelve persons in prison is scarcely a greater secret than if they were at liberty. Ferrières knew the adventure in the most minute details, and never ceased railing against La Noraye. Duquesnoy and I went to his rooms, making it our pretext that we wished to see some views of the Bosphorus in water-colours, which he never ceased extolling to us, but really in order to try to stop his infernal tongue. He spoke of the scene that had taken place between La Noraye and me. We underrated its importance as much as we could, trying to reduce it to a mere joke; but our friend would not be so easily blinded. He told us that was all very well, but that he likewise

had a reckoning to bring against that rogue La Noraye, who had dared to say, in Madame Lebau's kitchen, that he, Ferrières, was a spy; and added, "He wanted to send you to the tribunal: be easy, he shall precede you." Duquesnoy answered, "That would not tranquillize us or any one else; for the poor fellow is such a gossip, and so inconsistent, that if he were brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, he might easily be the cause of our all three being taken thither, and I do not know how many more with us." "I do not know," answered Ferrières, "whether he would find that as easy as you suppose; but he has a right to have a whelp of my dog's, and so he shall." And so far Ferrières but too well justified the reproach that La Noraye had applied to him. Two days afterwards we read in the evening paper that the Citoyens Leconteulx de Canteleu and Leconteulx du Molé had been removed from their houses, where they were guarded by sans-culottes, and had been taken to the Bishop's palace, where they were going to collect all the members of the family, as authors or accomplices of the conspiracy that took place in January 1793, to deliver the tyrant from the scaffold.

At the same time La Noraye was informed that he might at any moment expect to be transferred to the Bishop's palace. The form of the accusation was all the more threatening, that it was true that, at the King's trial, Leconteulx de Canteleu had been commissioned by the Bank of Saint Charles to open an account with the Spanish Minister at Paris, and furnish him with all the funds that might be needed to secure the safety of Louis XVI.; and Leconteulx had thrown himself with equal devotion and courage into everything demanded of him. I even believe that this great trust had been extended to La Noraye, and that he had acquitted himself in an honourable manner. When the unhappy man found

himself in such extremities, he lost the little head he ever had, and persuaded himself that he had to thank Ferrières for the misfortune that impended over him and his connections. He did not dare to ask me to take any steps towards Ferrières on his behalf, but applied to Duquesnoy, who answered for me as well as for himself that we would do all in our power. We attacked Ferrières, both together and separately; I threw myself, so to speak, at his feet, to beg him not to persecute an honourable family for the folly of a single member, who had not himself deserved such cruel treatment. Ferrières asserted that he had nothing to do with what was preparing against the Leconteulx. "Perhaps I might be able to do for them what I have done for others—delay their trial by means peculiar to myself; but if I have no reason for persecuting them, neither have I any for serving them. Say no more about it: justice must take its course. It is all one to me." We called in the assistance of our wives, whom we named the *dames de bon secours*. Ferrières, ruffian as he was, seemed full of consideration and respect towards them, and so they warmly undertook the affair. At last he went to see them, and said, "I am a great scoundrel, am I not? Well, you have persuaded me to do what I should have refused to do for God or devil. You know that torrents are sometimes stemmed by bits of straw. The bits of straw are there. Let the Leconteulx hold their tongues; they have plenty of time before them. To prove it to you, La Noraye shall not be disturbed in La Force."

Such was our vengeance on La Noraye, who, I ought to say, never afterwards ceased to show most profound gratitude for it to Duquesnoy and to me.

It was during the month of Messidor that a new and very poignant grief fell upon me. I suddenly learned that my wife was dangerously ill. As I have mentioned,

I wrote a letter, and had a reply from her every day. All at once the communication ceased. Several excuses were devised and given to me for two or three days, but the truth came out at last. The cause of my wife's illness was so remarkable, that I will relate it in detail. I have already had occasion to mention the exchange of patronage and goodwill on one side, and respect and gratitude on the other, that existed between the house of Brienne and my family. This house, like some others at that time, exercised a certain lofty patronage of the province where its seat lay. It possessed all the qualifications that then combined to create influence of the highest order—high birth, wealth, the possession of grand posts, and the expectation of sooner or later reaching the highest position in the state. The eldest member of the family, the Archbishop of Toulouse, had for twenty years been in expectation of becoming Prime Minister, and people seemed impatient for the fulfilment of the expectation. His brother, the Count de Brienne, had directed his ambition into easier channels. In the city, he had deserved the appellation of an honest man, and was adored on his estates for his enlightened and ever-ready charity. He passed the greatest portion of the year amid his vassals; kept them in peace, never leaving distress unaided, or a grief unassisted. The mansion at Brienne was another Chanteloup. The one was frequented on account of the past, the other for the sake of the future. The Archbishop of Toulouse had followed in the track of the Duke de Choiseul, feeling very sure that if the Queen could not get back the Minister whom she preferred to all others, she would transfer her support to the statesman who most resembled him. In course of time, and by the help of continual intrigues, this scheme was completely successful. The archbishop gained the post of Prime Minister, and made his brother take that of Minister of

War. When the prelate came into office, the fabric of the state was crumbling on all sides; nor was he strong enough to sustain the monarchy even for a few moments over the brink of the abyss. He left the charge to those who were generally supposed to be better able to support it, but who met with no better success. On giving up office, the archbishop hastened into Italy to air his discomfiture. The count returned to Brienne, and was better received there than ever, since there was no fear of losing him. I was known to them both, and it was enough to have a fair reputation, and to live in the province, to be welcomed at Brienne. The spirit of philosophy ruled at that house, and raised the family above those prejudices about nobility which were fostered by the country noblesse of the neighbourhood, but were rated at their true worth in the halls of Brienne.

Then came the Revolution, and displayed all its severity. The archbishop took a bold step; he alone, of the old bishops of France, took the oaths to the civil constitution of the clergy. I say *alone*, for the Abbé de Perigord had hardly time to put on his bishop's robes before he pulled them off again. The Bishop of Verviers had been insane for some time, and De Jarente, the coadjutor of Orléans, could only be numbered among men of infamous and debauched character. It would be no promotion for the archbishop to be put at the head of such a trio. However, when once he had chosen his part, he continued faithful to it to the end. The Pope censured the oath he had taken, and enjoined him by a brief to retract; the archbishop considered this an insult, and returned his cardinal's hat. Every day he took a further step, till, being elected president of the Jacobin club of Sens, he fulfilled the functions with the red cap on his head. The Count de Brienne did not go so far, although he might have done so without causing so much

scandal as his brother. He remained at Brienne, and acted as mayor of the place, not sparing himself any more than did the archbishop in the matter of the red cap, when there was any need of mounting it. These exhibitions of adhesion to the Revolution preserved his credit with the people, and as he employed it, as he had done before all this, in keeping the peace and doing good, no one in the county would have sought him out or disturbed him. The end of the month Germinal, in the year II., had come, and in his part of the country it was hardly perceptible that there was a revolution in France, when suddenly this tranquillity was disturbed by a most unhappy incident. The archbishop lived at Sens, in the abbey of St. Pierre le Vif, which he had bought as a more convenient habitation than the old archbishop's palace. He had with him his niece, the Marquise de Canisy—an amiable woman, who could understand the prelate, and knew how to make him listen to her—and one of his adopted nephews, the Abbé de Lomenie, who had been appointed his coadjutor before the Revolution, and who would have supplied his place in every respect, had he not been carried away, with the rest, in the shipwreck of the clergy. The Count de Brienne, who at times visited his brother, was at Sens at the moment I speak of, and had brought two other nephews with him, brothers to the coadjutor—the Viscount and Charles de Lomenie, both of them persons of distinction, and of different characters. So the whole family was together at Sens, except Madame de Brienne, who was left alone at Brienne. It happened that an agent of the Committee of Government came to Sens to arrest and take to Paris an old officer, an acquaintance of the MM. de Lomenie. They thought that they ought to go and take leave of him before his departure. The interview was touching, and, unfortunately, was witnessed by the agent

of the committee. Pity was then a crime, or very near it. The agent asked the name of these young men, their conduct and habits. This information could not be given without communications relating to the Brienne family. He took down notes, and went to Paris. Two days later the same agent returned bearing warrants of arrest against every member of the family, and proceeded to execute them, only leaving them the night to prepare for their departure. Ever since the beginning of the Revolution, the archbishop had taken the precaution of being provided with one of Cabanis' lozenges; he swallowed it when he went to bed, and was found dead the next morning. The rest of the family were brought to Paris, and taken to the prison of the Madelonnettes. M. de Brienne, who had an attack of the gout, went to his house in the Rue Saint Dominique, and stayed there guarded by four sans-culottes. My wife no sooner learned this sad intelligence than she hastened to the Count de Brienne's house. She saw that he was very badly guarded, and pressed him a first time to make his escape; he answered that he had still plenty of time before him, and said he must consider. Next day she returned to the charge, and proposed the means of escape. The Hôtel de Brienne had a railing towards the square of the Bourbon Palace; nothing could be easier than to fasten a rope-ladder outside this, by which the railing could be very easily passed. M. de Brienne wished to know where he could hide, if he got away; my wife, with an answer for everything, told him that his retreat was all ready, in a place free from suspicion, with one of the clerks of the Revolutionary Tribunal. M. de Brienne seemed as if he would consent: my wife arranged the day and hour with him. That day, when all was in readiness, my wife went to his house; she found M. de Brienne's intention at first doubtful, and

afterwards decidedly against her plan. After all, what could they accuse him of? He had never done anything against the Republic—no intrigues, no agent sent to those who had fled the country, no correspondence without. He accused my wife of confounding his position with my own. The difference was great: I had been put forward, and belonged to a party; this party had been vanquished, and I might naturally look for their vengeance; but against him, once more, what allegations could be brought? My wife had replies enough ready; but M. de Brienne having added that he was deeply affected by her devotion, but feared that her visits might bring suspicion on him, she left him with many tears, and refrained from presenting herself at his house. Nine days went by. It was said that Madame Elizabeth had been condemned, and was going to be led to the scaffold. She was a princess, or rather an angel, going to be united in heaven with the martyrs of her race. Madame Duquesnoy and my wife wished to behold her last moments on earth; and they arranged to stand on the road and pray for her as she passed, and accordingly placed themselves at the corner of the Rue St. Honoré. The dreadful train advanced, consisting that day of six vehicles. My wife cast a glance on the first of these, and it fell on M. de Brienne. She knew him, and saw that he knew her. This was a thunder-stroke, and she fell back insensible. She was carried home in a burning fever, her brain already affected. Janroy, her doctor, came in haste, and thought her in great danger. Indeed, she was in extreme peril, and was hardly expected to survive the fourth night. My friends prepared me, as best they might, for this distracting bereavement. I took my resolution. Only one being still bound me to life, my daughter of four years old. I considered that, whatever might be the lot of my family, she would find refuge in

that of her mother, whose misfortunes I did not anticipate, and I entreated pardon most earnestly; but I was resolved to die, and should have infallibly carried out my guilty purpose if my wife had sunk. We had been advised, in case we had kept Cabanis' lozenge for some time without using it, to soften it with three or four drops of olive oil. I prepared it thus: I burned my papers, and left a letter for an old friend of the family. Freed from every care, I went down to the wicket in a sort of barbarous indifference, to learn whether I was to live or to die. I heard then that my wife continued very ill, but had at least survived the night. I went back to my room, softened by this ray of hope, and even shed a few tears. I cannot tell whether I should have confronted death the next day with equal composure: I have my doubts. Unless a man has been trained in a stern stoicism, or is a prey to such physical emotion as to deprive him of freedom of thought, he seldom long retains the notion of putting himself to death, or meditates on it at his leisure; and this is the reason why the very persons who have only half succeeded in accomplishing their purpose willingly accept the relief administered to them, and end by wishing for a renewal of their life. My wife's suffering state lasted nearly two months, and only yielded by degrees under the continual attentions of her friends, and to the general joy at the revolution of Thermidor. I had taken very little share in what passed around me during these two months, and was only aroused from my indifference by the news of the battle of Fleurus.

Among the inmates of the council-chamber, was Citizen Garat, one of the first clerks of the Treasury. He thoroughly understood the mechanism of this great machine, and the Deputy Cambon, who had undertaken to manage it, had begged the Committees of Government to restore Garat,

since he could not get on without him. The committees had refused; but, in order to reconcile the requirements of the Treasury with the detention of Garat, two gendarmes daily came to conduct him from La Force to the Treasury, where he worked all day, and was brought back to sleep in prison; besides which, he was forbidden to bring either papers or news into the prison; and the man, uncommunicative by nature, faithfully observed the injunction. But on the day when the battle of Fleurus was known in Paris, he could not withhold the information, and awakened us with it. As soon as I heard it, I cried out, "We are saved! Terror cannot dog the heels of victory." Indeed, the internal divisions in the Government Committees, that were to bring about a catastrophe, dated from that epoch.

However, the batches of the Revolutionary Tribunal daily became more numerous, and the aspect of the prison was entirely changed. From thirty to forty deputies, among whom ten at least were men of education and good breeding, had been, as I have said, transferred to the Madelonnettes. Since the establishment of the general table, the old or rich, to whom the comforts of life had become necessities, had passed into hospitals. Those who had been taken to the Revolutionary Tribunal were, if not the most estimable of the prisoners, at least those of the most elegant manners; so that the council-chamber, with the exception of about five or six persons, was only now occupied by individuals who lived very much apart. Then we saw that La Force had become a sort of chapel of ease to the Conciergerie, and that the superabundance that flowed in from the provinces was sent thither. So the new-comers were but few days there, and speedily passed to the tribunal. The manner in which they were summoned was cruel to every one. At this time all forms of justice, even the most expeditious, had been laid aside,

and counsel for the defence had been suppressed. The indictment was notified to the accused at ten in the morning; he was brought up for trial at eleven or twelve; judgment was given at two, and executed before four. It was difficult for the usher who brought the indictments to unearth the prisoners in their rooms, and thus it was found convenient to announce the coming of the usher by a bell, at whose sound all the prisoners, without distinction, were obliged to assemble in the gallery outside the first floor, along the buildings of the great yard of the prison. The officer, surrounded by gendarmes, stood in the centre of the yard, with the bundle of indictments in his hand, and shouted out one of the names that appeared in these documents. The unhappy man who was called, without any more preparation than the rest of the spectators, had only time to give his next neighbour the greatest treasures he had about him. Generally this was the portrait of his wife or of his mistress, a lock of hair, some relic or jewel, a farewell letter that he always had ready. Alas! more than once I received these sad deposits from hands almost unknown to me, because I chanced to be by the side of the unfortunate who, on his descent into the yard, was surrounded by gendarmes, and never left by them till the foot of the scaffold was reached. Though I had reason to hope that my name would not be pronounced in this formidable arena, I could not be certain; so that this lottery of blood that was drawn every day poisoned my life, as it did that of all around me, and to such an extent that the evening before the decade a visible repose and satisfaction could be perceived among the prisoners. The decade was one of relaxation for the tribunal, and every prisoner felt his life safe for twenty-four hours. We were in this condition when we heard that the Committees of Government had at last come to a decision on

the fate of the prisoners. Those who were not to be tried before the Revolutionary Tribunal were to be divided into two classes—one to be condemned to transportation, the other to be imprisoned till peace should be made. And some commissions were really appointed to take charge of this great operation, and make the division. One of these began to sit at La Force to interrogate the prisoners; but, as a preface to the examination, they had given us some papers to fill up and sign, the result of which would have been, in fact, to set forth what we had done to deserve hanging in case of a counter-revolution. This paper contained twelve columns. In one was the question, "Where were you on the day of the tyrant's death? Do you approve of his execution —yes or no?" and in another, "Do you consent to equality with the sans-culottes, or not?" Some prisoners, apparently very respectable men, were base enough to reply to these questions in the affirmative, and repeat the same assurance in their verbal examination, and thus gained the favour of being only condemned to imprisonment till the time of peace. As for Dupont, Duquesnoy, and myself, we did not hesitate a moment, and flatly refused to fill up the papers that had been given to us, whatever might come of it. The prison was quite in an agitation over this work of filling up papers, submitting to examinations, and pronouncing decisions, when safety appeared from quite a different quarter.

On the 9th Thermidor, about four o'clock in the afternoon on a fine summer day, I was walking in the yard with Dupont and Admiral Latouche Treville. Dupont was in warm discussion with the admiral on the substitution of free for slave labour in the sugar islands, when all at once he stopped and said, "My dear comrades, I hear the tocsin. Yes, it is indeed, really and truly, the tocsin; we must be on our guard." The

admiral instantly left us, went up to his room and barricaded himself into it. We were twenty-four hours without hearing anything of him. He afterwards told us that his notion was, in case of a revolutionary crisis, to keep himself quiet till it was decided who had the best of it, and then to go and salute the conqueror. We also went up to the council-chamber, and were soon all assembled there. Dupont harangued us, and explained the danger that we were menaced with. From the sounding of the tocsin, it was very likely they intended to renew the scenes of September in the prisons, and for his own part he was determined to sell his life dearly. He exhorted us to do the same, and detailed his plan of defence. There were twelve of us, and we could arm ourselves after a fashion with the fire-irons, which were happily not taken away, with two daggers which we had amongst us, and, lastly, with our knives and the legs of the chairs. The old order of battle must be adopted; that is, the strongest in the first line, next two others, three in the next line, and four in the last. This order of battle will take ten men; the two that are left, selected from the youngest, will be on the flanks of the army to assist wherever it may be required. Lastly, retreat must be thought of; and we would establish a strong barricade with our beds, behind which we would gather our forces together and wait for external aid. However anxious the moment was, it was impossible not to laugh at the serious way in which our good Dupont marshalled his battle array. He quite expected to fight, and insisted on a rehearsal of the manœuvre; but that was refused, though the post of military dictator for the moment of danger was unanimously decreed to him, and we really thought in the night that the dictator's dreadful office had really begun. Towards midnight we heard an extraordinary noise in the prison; the turnkeys, who

were keeping a faithful watch, intending either to defend or release us, came and told us that it was the bringing of Robespierre to La Force! We made them repeat it several times, while we remained dumb with astonishment. Half-an-hour later a still greater disturbance. This was said to be on setting Robespierre at liberty. The turnkeys had deceived us unintentionally: it was really a Robespierre who was the subject of these *tours de force*, but not the great Robespierre—only his brother. We were doubly terrified. It was plain that there was a fight somewhere, and it seemed as if Robespierre had been beaten at first and had got the upper hand again. A new incident confirmed this notion. There had come among us, a fortnight before, a certain juryman of the Revolutionary Tribunal, named Villate. This Villate was an intimate friend of Robespierre, and served him as a spy at the tribunal. The Committees of Government imputed some treason or another to him in the performance of these noble duties, and had arrested him. This little man, less than thirty years old, was endowed with an attractive and gentle face, and a tone and manner in conformity with it, and he affected an exquisite sensibility. It might be said of him, "A wounded butterfly made him shed tears." And the wretch was what was called in that den a sound juryman, which meant that it had not once happened to him in a whole year to vote for the acquittal of a prisoner. When he arrived in the prison, people were ready to beat him to death; Ferrières had even insinuated that it might be done with impunity, and I fancy it would have been done had not Duquesnoy and I opposed it. Just at the moment when young Robespierre was set at liberty, Villate had been called to go with him. We therefore thought that the elder one's victory was complete; but Villate, a thorough fop, took some time to

dress, and at the very moment when he was stooping to pass the street-wicket he met Bourdon de l'Oise, commissary to the Convention, who roughly shoved him back and had him locked up again.

These contradictory scenes succeeded rapidly, and were not unlike phantasmagoria. We could not tell how to fix our thoughts when, about two in the morning, they came to tell us of the triumph of the Convention, and that Robespierre and his friends had been arrested and cut to pieces. Dupont loudly announced that he resigned the dictatorship, and we all went to bed as usual; but no one could sleep, and daylight found us vehemently discussing the causes and probable consequences of the passages of that night. We had not long to wait for them; for the next day Robespierre and the chiefs of his party were put to death, and on the following the members of the Council General of the Commune, the presidents and secretaries of the rebellious sections, and the staff of the National Guard underwent the same fate. The mischief was deep, but the remedy was violent, and applied with blind energy. I will give a specimen. My wife's illness required much time and constant attention. Doctor Janroy, at that time the busiest physician in Paris, had substituted for himself in the daily visits a young physician whom he had selected by preference, as possessing an influence in the Commune that might be useful to the patient. My wife had taken a great fancy to him, because he was kindly attentive. He was with her during the evening of the 9th Thermidor. He was three times summoned to the General Council of the Commune. My wife begged him to go there, but he obstinately refused, not liking to leave her in the middle of all this disturbance, and saying besides that he had had enough of these perpetual conflicts between the Commune and the Convention. He

spent the night by my wife's bedside, only leaving her to obtain tidings in the house itself, that he brought to her when they were good, and varied if they were bad. When about two o'clock in the morning he thought that the crisis had ceased, he began to read to my wife, and ended by putting her and himself to sleep. At seven o'clock he was still in his chair; when he awoke, he said he should go to the Hôtel de Ville to ascertain the truth as to the scenes of the night, and that he would return immediately with the intelligence. So he went. He must have been arrested as soon as he reached the Hôtel de Ville, and so harshly treated as to have no means of defence, nor even of giving the most simple explanation; for the only tidings of him the next day was his name in the list of members of the General Council executed for having taken part in the proceedings of the night of the 9th and 10th Thermidor. Doctor Janroy concealed this cruel mistake from my wife. She was told that the young doctor had hastily quitted Paris, for fear of being called in question for some matters that had taken place earlier than Thermidor.

This great day had borne fruit rapidly within the prison. The Revolutionary Tribunal had a holiday. The words justice and humanity began to come to light. We all rejoiced in hope. All the commissaries of the Convention who had come in relays to torment us for six months past had perished; even Citoyen Vassot, the ingenious founder of our common meal. However, the Reign of Terror was still struggling for life among the Government Committees and at the tribune of the Convention. There it was loudly asserted that the Convention had not brought about the events of the 9th Thermidor for the benefit of its enemies, and that the Revolutionary Tribunal was going to be re-established to make a fresh

start. Municipal officers were named not much better than the old ones. Those who fell to our lot were rather worse—Trial, the actor of the Comic Opera, who had, I do not know how, passed without hindrance through the day that was so fatal to his friends. One day he came to the prison at noon, and had us all shut up in our rooms—a thing unheard of at that time of day; then he had them opened in succession, to display before the prisoners an allocution of his muse applicable to the circumstances. Among other beautiful things, he told the council-chamber that he knew that its inhabitants were nothing but pure aristocrats, and thought about nothing but good eating and drinking, but that we had better take care they did not put an end to our eating. While he delivered himself of these polite speeches and many more such, everyone of us pretended to be busy reading, or doing something else, so as not to seem to hear him. He fell into a rage, and called us hardened criminals. There was still the same silence. When the orator had retired we looked at one another, not knowing what to think or say. Dupont alone was not disturbed. He said, "Our villains threaten; therefore they are afraid. You can easily see that the poor devil has been prompted, I do not know where or by whom, but certainly by people who are not too secure. Let us hope! *Neque semper arcum tendit Apollo.*" And, in fact, a fortnight had not expired before, in the midst of their hesitations, and even of their efforts to resume the Reign of Terror, the Committees of Government were borne away by a contrary current. Some orders of release had already gone forth, and the first to be set at liberty were some pure aristocrats. Great was the offence among the constitutional prisoners. Poor La Noraye even sent a flat protest to the Committees of Government. I could not make him understand that

names which, for whatever reason, had never come forward in the Revolution would naturally find favour more readily in the eyes of the Convention than those of constitutionals who had at any time been found in the ranks of opposition to those now in power. However this might be, the sensible men among the constitutionals made up their minds to wait. Almost entirely delivered from any fear for our lives, we spent our time pleasantly and happily, notwithstanding Citoyen Trial's allocution. Even Dupont could not recall us to economical science. "See the danger of victory!" he cried; "their senses are at Capua."

Madame Lebau had told me that as soon as my wife's health permitted I should see her as often as she liked; so I got through the first month without too much impatience. My wife paid her first visit to me in the earlier days of Fructidor. I found her physical strength destroyed, and her mental powers still quite weak. She had lost her beautiful fair hair, was excessively thin, and had a fixed glance that alarmed me. I saw she had much difficulty in collecting her ideas, and considered it best not to talk to her on business; besides, I knew that her uncle was doing what he could for me. There was more difficulty in obtaining my discharge than that of any one else, because it was stated that there were overwhelming charges against me in the possession of the Committee of General Safety. One of my friends, a deputy named Pierret, a man excellent in every respect, undertook the task of going to ascertain the fact. By means of some pretext unconnected with me, he obtained the portfolio containing the papers having reference to the deputies from the department of the Aube, and managed to abstract that letter from me to Lafayette which I have before had occasion to mention, and which had somehow got there in consequence

of the trial of a M. d'Aigremont, who had been condemned to death during the first days of the Revolutionary Tribunal. When the letter was removed, my bundle contained nothing but my denunciation by another deputy named Garnier—just like all the denunciations of the period, but containing not a single precise statement. When it had been made certain that there was no other paper against me in the office, stronger solicitations were made for my release; but there still remained among the members of the committee two of my old colleagues in the Legislative Assembly who bore me a grudge, and held out against me. Citoyen Gatrey, tired of their resistance, in order to overcome it applied to Legendre, the famous deputy for Paris, and represented me as an old acquaintance and countryman of his friend Danton, unable on that account to obtain justice from the committee. Legendre remembered that he really had met me at dinner at Danton's, grew excited at this remembrance, and himself going to the committee, ordered in very forcible terms the passing of a decree that I should be set at liberty. No one durst refuse. Legendre did more; he came with Citoyen Gatrey to La Force to fetch me, and blamed me for not having thought of him sooner; and he was the more proud of his feat when he heard from Citoyenne Lebau of the kind of interest Danton had displayed on my behalf.

Thus I quitted the prison of La Force, with regret at still leaving my friends Duquesnoy and Dupont de Nemours there, but also in hopes of being fortunate enough to expedite their deliverance. I think I have before mentioned the singular coincidence that struck me at my first step outside of the prison. I heard proclaimed the condemnation to death of the miserable assassin whose cell at the Conciergerie I had for some time shared. I felt as if it were a warning from above,

and I went to my wife's house much overcome. The rejoicing of all around me seemed to pass by me without being shared by me. I was blamed; but I would not explain the shock that still stunned me, lest it should seem superstitious. Next day my wife's delight, and the number of beloved dear objects all recovered at once, restored me to ordinary life and the activity of mind which I was soon able to use or even abuse. Just gratitude had led me to Legendre's, where I found myself among the party of Thermidorians — Tallien, Merlin, De Thionville, Freron, Barras, &c. It was then resolved, and rightly, that the fall of Robespierre had not destroyed his party, and that the deputies of Thermidor must keep together as closely as ever, and must call to their aid all the men of any worth whom they had restored to liberty. They did me the honour of mentioning me among the rest, and pressed me much to stay at Paris.

CHAPTER IX.

Les Annales Troyennes—M. Beugnot Prefect of La Seine Inférieure—Financial Minister of Westphalia—Appointed President of the Council of Regency of the Grand Duchy of Berg—M. de Talleyrand—Düsseldorf—Münster—Feudality—*Le Colonat*—Westphalia—La Marck—Nassau-Siegen—Portrait of Beurnonville—Murat at Düsseldorf—M. Agard—Le Duc de Gaëta.

After the 9th Thermidor, M. Beugnot recovered his liberty, and retired to Bar-sur-Aube to his friends, to resume the functions of syndic advocate-general there, that his fellow-citizens had conferred on him in 1790. But he did not remain inactive in his retirement, and, while he performed the duties intrusted to him, took a considerable part in the editing of a paper called the *Annals of Troyes*. This collection had been established to sustain in the old province of Champagne those ideas of order and moderate reaction that were allowed to express themselves at last after the death of Robespierre. M. Beugnot set himself especially in this journal to treat of the questions of finance and foreign politics that then took up public attention. In an article entitled "A Word about Italy" the author wrote as follows, dated 3rd Messidor, of the year V. These lines have still the merit of being suitable. He said—

"Political reasons would counsel us to divide Italy into several independent states, each of which should have sufficient power to serve us, and among which there should not be any powerful enough to injure us. The project of making the Pope a mere bishop, and doing

something with Rome, is not new. . . . We ought to respect Italy on account of both religion and art.

"To destroy the throne of religion at Rome, and to desolate the empire of the fine arts in Italy, is to put an extinguisher on the human mind."

But the 18th Brumaire was the real date of M. Beugnot's entrance into political life. Lucien Bonaparte, who had known him during the latter times of the revolution, summoned him to his side in quality of Secretary-general to the Home Department, and employed him in organizing the Prefectures. When this work was finally settled, M. Beugnot was employed by the Minister to carry up the proposed enactment for the First Consul's signature. In this proposal every department was filled up with the name of the person intended to occupy it. The department of the Seine alone remained unoccupied. This vacancy caught the eye of the First Consul, who said to him—"Well, and Paris; do not you want it to have a prefect?" "Pardon me, general, but the Minister for Home Affairs gave me hopes that the First Consul——" "It is impossible: you are too late. I have promised the prefecture of the Seine to Frochot, who asked me for it before you did. Choose something else."

And sometime afterwards M. Beugnot was appointed to the Prefecture of Rouen. He remained there six years, from the 3rd of March, 1800, to the 21st of March, 1806. The remembrance of his administration is not lost in the department of the Lower Seine. In 1816 the electors of Rouen chose their old prefet of the Consulate to represent them at the Chamber of Deputies of the Restoration. And twenty years later, in 1835, the perpetual secretary of the Academy of Rouen, informing his colleagues of his death, expressed himself thus:—

"M. Beugnot came among us on the 3rd of March, 1800; then we saw him substituting among us, without reaction, without violence, and also without weakness, for the weak or tyrannical rule of the Directorate, the activity of the Consulate, and, later, the splendour of the Empire. Moderator of every one, he was calm after all the storms; wise after so much frothy folly, his chief care was to revive our manufactures and re-establish our most cherished institutions.

"Our agriculture owes to him the scarlet trefoil that he brought from Belgium, the Virginian poplar of such rapid growth, the productive English barley, and the importation of several Swiss bulls.

"Our manufactures ought to be grateful to him; for he encouraged our handicrafts so well that we ceased to draw from England the chief part of the woven fabrics that we needed.

"As to commerce, he seconded the views of a repairing government, and re-established our roads, which had been neglected for fifteen years. Those in the environs were annually repaired to the amount of fifteen or twenty thousand pounds, and warehouses for foreign merchandise were erected as well at Rouen as at Havre and Dieppe.

"Always ready to hear the voice of Pouchet and other manufacturers, friends of humanity, he took, in 1802, measures worthy of praise from all philanthropists, by establishing workshops for spinning and weaving in the House of Detention of Rouen. The prisoners had to learn to read, write, and cypher, and received lessons in religious morality.

"Public instruction owes to M. Beugnot the Cabinet of Natural History formed near the Central School, which is to our rich libraries what a first thought is to the discourse that unfolds it.

"Beloved by the learned societies of this town, he re-established the Academy; and there for two continuous years he was a member of the committee, and read some excellent papers.

"I must not forget the benefit of vaccination which through him we first enjoyed in France.

"It was by his administrative correspondence, an institution that did him honour, that he diffused all useful ideas, and made known how plane-trees must be propagated at once by slips, and those industrial exhibitions, on the first attempt to establish which the Lower Seine obtained two medals of gold.

"Charged with the difficult task of restraining the various parties, it might be observed that he disdained to employ either cunning or force. In 1804, a time of uneasiness and activity of the police, he was lenient, and yet the orders from Paris were violent. There is an anecdote on this head I can vouch for.

"After the arrival of Pichegru and Georges, Napoleon ordered M. Beugnot to seize suspected despatches at Rouen. But the postmaster maintained that letters intrusted to his guardianship were a sacred deposit. How did M. Beugnot act? He embraced the postmaster, and said, '*Yes, sir, I love and respect you.*'

"The faithful depositary did not lose his situation. M. Beugnot well knew how to defend a noble cause in his report. So, on the rock of St. Helena, Napoleon said, 'Beugnot, when he was prefect, always told me the truth.'"

In 1806 M. Beugnot left the Prefecture of the Lower Seine to enter the Council of State. He took a considerable part in the labours of this illustrious assembly, and especially distinguished himself in the discussion of the decree that allowed a legal recognition of their worship to the Jews, and permitted them, for the first time in France,

to unite in general assembly under the name of Sanhedrin.

But the Emperor, who, during his long stay at the camp at Boulogne, in the department of the Seine Inférieure, had shown himself satisfied with M. Beugnot's administration, did not leave him long at the Council of State, and on the 12th of March, 1807, he appointed him, with Counsellors of State Siméon and Jollivet, to organize the kingdom of Westphalia, created in favour of his youngest brother, Jérôme Bonaparte. Appointed Finance Minister to the King of Westphalia, M. Beugnot applied himself to establishing in the new kingdom the methods of order and accounts that were in existence in France. But he was not slow to see that it was a difficult task.

The Duke de Gaëta wrote to him, "Do not forget that you are the Emperor's Minister in the states of the King of Westphalia. His majesty lays great stress on your not losing sight of this."

So placed between the exigencies of Napoleon, who arrogated to himself rather unscrupulously the direction of the finances of Westphalia, and the well-founded complaints of King Jérôme, M. Beugnot solicited his sovereign's permission to return to France.

The King of Westphalia graciously granted his request, and expressed his regrets to him that he was deprived of his services, and on his departure gave him as a remembrance a valuable snuff-box adorned with his portrait.

However, M. Beugnot did not remain long in France. On the 19th of July, 1808, he was named imperial commissioner and President of the Council of Regency of the Grand Duchy of Berg, which the Emperor intended for the eldest son of the King of Holland. It is his stay in

the grand duchy that the author relates in the following fragments :—

THE GRAND-DUCHY OF BERG.

1808—1813.

I was at Paris, expecting a new mission. The Emperor, who had one half of the Continent beneath his dominion, and was in thought devouring the rest, had numerous agents to despatch to all parts. I expected to be sent to Spain, where the Grand-duke of Berg, Murat, was pursuing a course that was quite untenable. I had gathered some words which kept up my hopes, and directed them to that quarter. Meanwhile, the events that summoned the Emperor to the Castle of Marac and to Bayonne were taking place in the Peninsula. In fact, I was to have been of the party ; but the Emperor judged, with great reason, that the Archbishop of Malines was much more suitable than myself for the kind of negotiation that was to be set on foot there, and I resumed my old place at the Council of State. I hardly regretted having lost this opportunity. A new distribution of crowns took place at Bayonne. In consequence of the strange confusion that prevailed there, the Emperor's eldest brother mounted the throne of Spain, and left that of the Two Sicilies to the Grand-duke of Berg. The Grand-duchy of Berg passed to the son of the King of Holland, to whom the Emperor bore an especial affection. I received from Bayonne an order to proceed immediately to Düsseldorf, there to receive the Grand-duchy from the hands of the Ministers of the former possessor, and to assume the administration. I was desired to take care that these Ministers did not commit any sort of depredations, and to examine very closely the condition in which they were going to leave the business

to me. At that time, when orders were received, it was scarcely to be called life till they were executed. I decided to start the next day. I proceeded at once to the Arch-Chancellor to take leave. The Prince received me with his accustomed grace, and made vows for the success of this novel mission, in which he wished me all sorts of happiness, and he added, "My dear Beugnot, the Emperor arranges crowns as he chooses: here is the Grand-duke of Berg going to Naples. He is welcome: I have no objection. But every year the Grand-duke sent me a couple of dozen hams from his grand-duchy, and I warn you I do not intend to lose them, so you must make your preparations."

I assured his highness that I should feel much honoured by taking on myself this office of the Grand-duke of Berg, and that he should see how exact I should be. I never once omitted to acquit myself of the obligation as long as I managed the grand-duchy, and if there were any delay on the part of those whom I employed, his highness caused one of his secretaries to write a good scolding to my house-steward. But when the hams arrived exactly, his highness never failed to write to my wife himself to thank her for her present.* That was not all: the hams were to come carriage free! I was obliged to have them all collected at Cologne, whence they were entrusted to the mail-couriers in succession, who could not carry more than two at a time.

This petty jobbery occasioned discontent that I had

* To the Countess Beugnot.—"I will not defer the thanks, Countess, that I owe you for sending me the Westphalia hams that you announce to me in your letter of the 21st of this month. I am infinitely sensible of this proof of your attention, and beg you to believe that I feel it very much. Receive, my dear Countess, the sincere assurance of my attachment.

"The Arch-Chancellor of the Empire,

"CAMBACÈRES."

to repair, and it would not have cost me more to pay the carriage. The Prince would not allow it. There was an agreement between him and Lavalette for the couriers to bring gratis from all points of the empire tributes to be laid on his table; and my lord appeared to lay as much stress on the performance of this treaty as on the procuring of the hams.

I called on M. Talleyrand the same evening. There was not the slightest allusion to the delicacies of the table. The Prince was informed of all that had passed at Bayonne, and seemed indignant at it. He said, "Victories are not enough to efface such actions, because there is something mean, deceitful, and tricky about them. I cannot say what will happen, but you will see that no one will ever forgive him this."

Duke Decrès has more than once told me that the Emperor had in his presence reproached M. de Talleyrand with having advised him to do all that took place at Bayonne, and that he made no attempt to defend himself. It always surprised me. Besides, a slight knowledge of M. Talleyrand was sufficient to be very sure that, even if he had secretly been of the opinion that the princes of the House of Bourbon ought to be dispossessed of the throne of Spain, he certainly did not point out the means that were employed. Afterwards, when he spoke to me, it was with a kind of passion, such as he never evinced except when events had greatly moved him. Otherwise, he considered my mission an excellent one, but recommended me to manage better than I had done at Cassel, and to strive to make myself *independent*. I felt the meaning of the reproach, and, while doing justice to the feeling that had dictated it, I promised myself to continue to deserve it.

I came to Düsseldorf. It is a pretty town, situated in a picturesque position at the junction of the Düssel with

the Rhine. The river washes its walls to the west, and serves as a defence. On the other side, the country comes close up to the town; the streets are tidy, and at convenient distances; the houses are not wanting in elegance. It is not easy to find a spot that lends itself more readily to embellishment. I found much pleasure in attending to it. Since my departure, the works I had not time to begin have been completed; and it is said, by general consent, to be now one of the most smiling cities of Germany. Düsseldorf was then the capital of the Grand-duchy of Berg, which had been just constructed out of the Duchy of Berg, properly so called, which had been ceded by Bavaria, the county of La Mark and country of Münster, detached from Prussia by the treaty of Tilsitt, and the Duchy of Nassau-Siegen obtained by exchange from the House of Nassau.

The population consisted of a million of souls, comprising two hundred thousand households, and scattered over an extent of eight hundred and forty-six leagues. I saw that this population was not wanting in industry. When I had verified the proportion between the employed and unemployed, the husbandmen and artisans, the great classes of workmen between themselves, and all with the officials, I found that industry had advanced in certain parts to a degree of perfection and activity I could never have supposed. Agriculture had not proceeded at a similar pace. The country contained a large proportion of open plains, heaths, and marshes; and I saw that I must begin with an attack on them.

Manners were, in general, of the mild and pompous character usual among all the Germans; but each division presented a peculiar shade, partly derived from the difference of religion and government, and partly from its geographical position. The country of Münster, for

instance, savoured of the old ecclesiastical power that had at first held the authority, cemented and riveted afterwards by the feudal system. The town, as is shown by its very name, began in the eleventh century around a monastery, and thus contained a great number of fraternities of men and women within its bounds, and the bishop was the sovereign. When the population collected round the monastery, it received feudal laws in all their integrity, and these laws were still in force when France took possession of the country in virtue of the treaty of Tilsitt. The town of Münster only contained a very limited number of merchants, who furnished the most necessary articles of consumption. The rest was occupied by spacious mansions, where the gentlemen of the neighbourhood passed a portion of the year. Their luxury reminded one of that of France in the seventeenth century; for that age had attracted the imitation of all Germany, and the traces of it are still to be found in the most retired countries of this vast territory. The mansions at Münster are generally more extensive than commodious; the servants were numerous, and the old etiquettes were scrupulously observed; the furniture and plate rich, though heavy. I had observed in the coach-houses a sort of wooden horse, or rather rack, on which it would be very difficult to keep one's balance; and I asked for what sort of game this instrument could be employed. The answer I got was that it was not intended for a game, but to punish a servant, by putting him on it for some hours for any failure in his duty. There were still severe punishments in case of necessity; but this was the most common, and was inflicted by the masters, like all the others, without any notion of appeal or objection on the part of the servants.

One bank of the Rhine was at this time a long way off from the other. These masters, who ruled over their

servants like the villains or serfs, behaved to them otherwise like fathers. They hastened to their aid when there was any misfortune to remedy; they took care of them in sickness, and sheltered their old age. A large number of children was a matter of pride to the retainer, and of joy to the proprietor. All these good things had taken such firm root in their manners, that they went on unnoticed. I have often, when encountering such facts, traced out the principle whence they were derived, and ceased to wonder that the feudal system lasted so long. Besides, the population—bound down, it is true, to the cultivation of the land, but allowed a certain profit as payment for its work—was, at least, protected from the dangers of poverty, and of illness and old age; so, I would ask, was it more to be pitied than that cloud of men whom we see likewise crowded and enchained by want to the manufacturing workshops that feed or make victims of them with equal indifference, and frequently, having used up their powers in trades often fatal to life, only offer them the prospect of the hospital in sickness, and mendicancy when unable to work? Unhappy are they who never find a protector to help them, or a friend to console them, amid these troubles of life. Certainly I do not share the Gothic infatuation of the Count de Boulainvilliers, but it is possible that the question may still be undecided whether the manufacturing system is more favourable than the old feudal system to the men of toil and labour —that is to say, to infinitely the greatest number. Governments now rush along the road to manufactures, as if it were the only road to salvation; the splendour of Great Britain captivates and seduces them; but penetrate through this splendour and fascination, and what do you find? A small number of large owners, of very rich capitalists, of gigantic manufactories, plunged into the middle of a population miserable in every respect, and

which will end by finding out their numbers. The country of Münster, of which I am speaking, still belongs to a different system.

The peasants there are generally religious, sober, hard-working, and all-attentive to the culture of the lands they possess under the title of *colonat*. This *colonat* resembles to some extent the serfage that still existed in some parts of France before the Revolution. The lord, who apparently was originally owner of the whole of a domain, had distributed it out to colonists on a perpetual lease of various covenants, larger or smaller, in proportion to the fertility of the land and the number of colonists of whom the community was first formed. In most of the *colonats* the lord received half the produce of all kinds, including that of cattle; and on the death of the holder of the *colonat* he became his heir for a certain portion of the property. He had not altogether the power of retaining on the soil a colonist who wished to quit it; but the latter lost all his rights in the *colonat*, and it became free, and devolved to the seigneur. The detail of the provisions for division among children, for assistance in case of fire or losses of other kind, for widows, and for old men, were conceived in a spirit of wisdom and humanity.

This sort of establishment encouraged labour, and at the same time provided complete security for the labourers, and thence arose the spirit of peace that reigned among them. These men, continually occupied at work in the fields, always beneath the vault of heaven, awaiting the dew to make their labours bear fruit, are very religious. The Holy Scripture furnishes them with all they want in the way of light, consolation, and hope; and they want none from elsewhere. It has often been said that they slept under the same roof and without separation from the cattle; and that is true in a certain degree.

But this old German custom is not so disgusting as our delicacy would suppose. The arrangement of the ground floor of a farm in Westphalia is more convenient and often cleaner than the kind of stable where most of the farmers of France are pent up apart from their flocks and herds. The Westphalian farm is a repetition of the patriarch's tent; for men in the early days of the world, apparently from recollection of the joys of Eden, lived in familiarity with the animals, which preserved something of their original tameness. Voltaire has liberally poured forth his derision on poor Westphalia, its castles, its inhabitants, and there is not a Frenchman who sets his foot in it without remembering his Thunder-ten-tronke. I was quite ready to laugh at his class: the difficulty was in finding them. I have met, among the nobles of the country, men wanting neither in learning nor in dignity, and nearly all marked by an inexhaustible charity. In the country, I have seen the men gentle and hospitable, the women chaste and industrious, and the children obedient. There certainly, according to the fine expression of Tacitus, *corrumpere et corrumpi non sæculum vocatur*. When I visited this ancient country with my *Germania* in my hand, I recognised the truth of the sketches of the great painter, and I no longer suspect his pictures of being imaginary.

The county of La Marck, close by, presented a perfectly different scene. This little province had been detached from the kingdom of Prussia by the treaty of Tilsitt. The land is generally mountainous, and that portion of it which is level is not very fertile; but the county of La Marck preserved traces of the long and careful administration of Frederick the Great in full activity, and I cannot imagine that it could be made better than I found it. Not a stream but had been made use of, not a useful communication but had been opened, nor a com-

mercial correspondence presenting any advantage but was established. So this country was covered with very active workshops, where ingenious processes, still unknown in France, were largely employed. Frederick had put in charge of the manufacturing interest of La Marck M. Eversmann, one of the most capable men I ever met. He always travelled to Sans Souci every year during the life of Frederick the Great. The King had speedily recognised his worth, and liked to hear him on matters of political economy; but, faithful to his system of not removing a man from a post where he was doing well in order to put him into another where it was supposed that he would do better, Frederick always sent M. Eversmann back to his county of La Marck. I repeat, this country was then the most advanced in the grand-duchy, and perhaps in Germany; but the inhabitants were not men of the Grand-duchy of Berg, nor even Germans,—they were Prussians; and it will be found, by close observation, that great is the difference between these latter and the rest. The Prussians have in common with the Germans their language, courage, inclination to be *illuminati;* but in the school of Frederick they have become unscrupulous, bold, and especially irreligious; their master taught them that success was everything, and that the means were nothing. The glories of a long reign, the reputation of the name of Frederick, who was the one warrior of the eighteenth century, as well as one of its cleverest men, when cleverness was a power, had given the Prussians an exaggerated notion of themselves, and also a love of their country amounting to idolatry. They retained that love when I was administrator of their provinces, that is to say, at the very time when Prussia was cut into fragments, which Napoleon was distributing to the right and left; and yet, when I took possession of the county of La Marck,

I saw that all was not over with men who did not allow that they were conquered, and dreamed of vengeance even while their enemy had them under foot and was ready to give the finishing stroke.

The country of Nassau-Siegen composed the third portion of the grand-duchy. This was the ancient patrimony of the House of Nassau, fertile in warriors and statesmen of the foremost rank, and it has on this account long played a great part in the empire, and afterwards presided with wisdom over the destinies of Holland. This little country is one of the most picturesque in Germany. The inhabitants are hard-working, educated, livelier than usual in such a climate, and well-disposed to everything good that can be required of them. When I went to visit this country for the first time, I asked to be taken to the old oak under which Maurice was sitting when a deputation of the *Gueux* of Holland came to ask him to put himself at their head, and assist them to defend their liberty. My respect for a tradition dear to the country was successful. I was accompanied by a numerous *cortége* in my political pilgrimage. I really did see an enormous oak, such as I had never seen before. A bench, kept in good order, and, besides, thick enough to have lasted out the time, is fixed at the foot of the tree, and surrounds it. Here, they told me, was the place where Maurice was wont to come and rest, and where he really received the first Dutch deputation. Some doubts might well occur to my mind, not of the fact itself, but of the identity of the bench and oak-tree. I was surprised that they had remained so long; but so many men of respectable appearance attested it with such good faith, they added so many histories more or less marvellous, but all to the honour of the princes of the House of Nassau, that I thought the best thing I could do was to believe it all in a lump. What is the

use of attacking by reasoning those old stories repeated with such perfect good faith, and listened to with so much pleasure in the country? All of them celebrate fine acts of virtue or marvels prompted by religion; they celebrate them in the very places supposed to have witnessed them, and thence arises a charm superior to all the researches of art, and perhaps to truth. I know nothing that more affected me as a child than the song of Genoveva of Brabant, and even to this day I cannot hear it without emotion.

As I am permitting myself a digression while giving a description of the countries that made up the Grand-duchy of Berg, I should like to relate the curious negotiation which was employed to obtain from Prince William the cession of his Duchy of Nassau. This country was indispensable to the boundaries of the new state which the Emperor was resolved to form under the title of the Grand-duchy of Berg, and besides it could not remain in the air, so to speak, between France, possessing all the left bank of the Rhine, and the States that were just organized on the right bank. The Emperor took the course of treating with Prince William for the exchange of his principality for one as extensive and more productive in the interior of Germany.

M. de Talleyrand was Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Prince was then at Paris, where he had some acquaintance with General Beurnonville. M. de Talleyrand cast his eyes on the latter to manage the exchange. He knew that the general had that swaggering exterior, together with something decisive about him, which he thought just the thing to overcome the obstinacy of Prince William, which had passed into a proverb. The proposal to exchange had been reduced to writing beforehand; and the Minister, giving it to General Beurnonville, advised him to make use of all the dexterity at his command to

obtain the consent of the Prince, but to do nothing hastily, and to engage in it very gently, and with moderation. The Minister added, "It certainly is a cruel extremity for the chief of the House of Nassau to give up an hereditary state that has so many glorious remembrances attached to it. His feelings may be very strong on this point without any extravagance. We must proceed cautiously, and, I repeat, take time on our side." Beurnonville praised the delicate precautions of the Minister over and over again, and took charge of the papers containing his mission. Next morning M. Talleyrand found the general at his levée. "Well, have you seen Prince William already? No doubt you are come to tell me that you have had a sharp reception. We expected that. But the beginning is not much in such an affair: patience, and we shall succeed." "Not at all," said Beurnonville; "all is complete. Here are the duplicates of the treaty signed by the Prince." M. de Talleyrand: "But by what miracle, and how, did you seize your opportunity?" The General: "*Ma foi!* I carefully turned the recommendations you gave me yesterday over in my mind. When I left you, I went straight to the Prince, and found him alone. It was the very moment to talk business to him, so I said to him, 'Prince, you know, or you do not know, that the Emperor wants your Duchy of Siegen. He offers you in exchange a principality in the interior of Germany, with a numerous population and more valuable productions: here is the treaty in readiness. I know very well that you have several good reasons for refusing this arrangement; but (with an oath) you are not the strongest. So believe me, and take the pill as best you may.'" "And the Prince took the pill?" inquired M. Talleyrand, coolly. "Yes, without making faces," said Beurnonville; "and, indeed, I did not expect to get it done so soon."

Some time afterwards the military negotiator had his picture painted in all the splendour then indispensable, in the complete costume of a general, his left hand leaning on a great sabre, in the distance a hussar holding two horses by the bridle. So far there was nothing in this portrait but what was sure to be in that of any other general,—such was the portrait-painting of the day; but, in order at the same time to indicate the negotiator, the painter had placed in the right hand of his figure a roll of papers three parts unfolded, with the word "Treaty" at the head, while the rest of the page remained in blank. This roll Beurnonville was presenting with a decided and menacing deportment, seeming to those who knew the details as if he were repeating the words that were the keystone of his negotiation with Prince William. M. de Talleyrand one day said to me, "Beugnot, have you seen the portrait of Beurnonville, by Robert Lefebvre? "Yes;" I think it is like, and rather well painted." "That was not what I meant; but something is wanting. Why did he not inscribe on the blank page, in the General's hand, 'Prince, take the pill'? Then it would be complete; the expression of the head, the motion of the lips, would be explained, and the portrait become historical. You are intimate with Beurnonville. Tell him not to leave the work unfinished; he owes it both to us and to himself."

This has been a tolerably long digression from the grand-duchy of Berg, and it is scarcely excused by its being *à propos* to a notable portion of that state. I return to my subject. I have already rapidly described the Bishopric of Münster, the county of La Marck, and the territory of Nassau: I conclude with the portion that ought to have been first attended to, being the most considerable, and giving its name to the rest,—the Duchy of Berg properly so called.

This province was long an appanage of the Palatine

house, and then passed to that of Bavaria. The city of Düsseldorf is the capital, which is very happily situated on the Rhine, well built, and showing evidently, both by its buildings and the manners of the inhabitants, that it has been the seat of a polished court, friendly to the fine arts. A Medici was the wife of the Prince Palatine who had to pay so dear for being in the way of Louis XIV. She brought in her train to the depths of Germany the fine arts, those ancient and noble guests of her family. Düsseldorf thus obtained one of the most beautiful galleries of pictures in Europe, public places, some tolerable public buildings, and at Bensburg, not far from the city, a mansion in the Italian taste, of which any country in Europe might be proud. The princes who succeeded Charles Louis held themselves bound to maintain the impulse he had given. Under such a government the inhabitants of the Duchy of Berg contracted gentle and polished manners, and tastes rather for office than for independence. This, however, is only true of Düsseldorf and its immediate circle. Turning eastward, the valleys of Barmen and Eberfeld, and the cantons of Ronstorf, of Romscheit, or Solingen, present a triumph of human industry that it would be vain to expect in any other country of Europe, not excepting England.

Few states of the second or third order offered so many advantages as the grand-duchy in the hands of a prince allied with France—a fine position on the Rhine, a population divided between agriculture and manufactures; the first deserving some encouragement, which was easy to obtain; the latter come to a pitch at which there was nothing more to do than to let it have its swing and admire it. The inhabitants had education, a natural gentleness, taste for improvement, and were ready to give their love to the French, if only they were treated with some sort of justice. Assuredly a principality thus

composed might satisfy a tolerable amount of ambition; but it was far from satisfying that of Marshal Murat, and his consort even felt almost humiliated by it. They had accepted it while awaiting something better.

Murat had made two journeys to Düsseldorf, in the course of which he had displayed his natural love of splendour to a ridiculous extent. The inhabitants had been dazzled, but secretly flattered. The state of the new Grand-duke very far surpassed in magnificence that of the ancient sovereigns, and Düsseldorf thought it had gained by the change. Besides, to do Murat justice, when once his princely or knightly pantomimes were over, he showed himself to be an intelligent and well-intentioned man. His military glory served him for a pedestal. When the bulletins of the Prussian campaign spoke unceasingly of the Grand-duke of Berg and his prowess, his new subjects were quite elated; the newspapers were read in public places, and there were serious fears for the safety of the intrepid prince. Oh, how little would it have cost to gain the attachment of the Germans, who cannot resist the fascination of military glory, in whose eyes the oath of fidelity is not an empty phrase, and who felt a sort of old inclination for France, of which we so cruelly cured them!

Marshal Murat had no sooner been raised to the rank of Prince than he took a fancy to be exactly like any other, and a match for any of them—even the Emperor. The Duchy of Berg, as it was when he received it, included the town of Wesel, a strong town on the Rhine, and of great importance to the defence of the river, as the Emperor had already perceived. The Emperor required that the grand-duchy should yield him this town in exchange for the Duchy of Nassau and the Principality of Dissembourg. The Grand-duke hesitated long. Such a place in his dominions enhanced his importance, and, exag-

gerating the value to France of this acquisition, he demanded an enormous recompense, I believe, the negotiators of this grand affair had to be very careful in mentioning to the Emperor the difficulties in which his brother-in-law delighted. Yet the delay could not be concealed, and the Emperor, wearied out, uttered his ultimatum. Marshal Murat became furious, and loudly declared that there was now only one course left for him —to throw himself into the town of Wesel with his army and defend it. He should see whether the Emperor would have the face to come and besiege him before the eyes of Europe; and as for himself, he could hold out to the last extremity. These words were all smoke, and ended in a fine treaty of exchange, the duplicate of which remained among my papers, at first from the difficulty of knowing to whom to restore it, and afterwards because it is a curious relic of the time, from the splendour of its lettering, of its binding, and getting up. This ridiculous little struggle of the Grand-duke may have contributed somewhat to his discomfiture in the affairs of this country.

The Grand-duke of Berg certainly had hopes of the crown of Spain when he was in command at Madrid in 1808. He even persuaded himself that he had a promise from the Emperor. It was to hasten the event that he had stirred up a fermentation in the midst of the capital, and afterwards repressed it, but with such strange circumstances that some motives for his conduct different from those he put forward must be sought for. It is not likely that the Emperor positively promised the crown of Spain to Marshal Murat; he must have given him some equivocal words of encouragement, which the latter explained in his own way by the magic of his ambition. His wife may have contributed to lead him astray, for this sister of the Emperor thought herself out of place any-

where but on the throne; and it must be allowed that the force of her character and the loftiness of her mind seemed to have prepared her for one. The husband and wife were baffled in their views on Spain. Possibly the petty strife raised up by the Marshal for the town of Wesel caused the Emperor to lay aside the idea of intrusting to him a position of so much importance as Spain and the Indies. So he had to resign himself to the throne of the Two Sicilies, which he received ungraciously enough. This is worth noting for the instruction of posterity.

Then was the time when I arrived at Düsseldorf to take possession of the grand-duchy for the Emperor. I received it from the hands of M. Agard, who had administered it on behalf of the last sovereign. This M. Agard is a man of perpetual cares, always on guard against himself as well as others; for the rest, cultivated literature, and yet was a good man of business. He had begun with some small office in the branch of public education, and then had attached himself to the fortunes of Murat, his countryman and friend from childhood. He had grown with them; and as there is no predicting how far the appetite may reach when once excited, his ambition had gone so far as to pretend to the hand of a cousin-german of the Prince—a little empty thing, who was only wanting in sense, figure, and health. At first the Prince thought this a great liberty on the part of his ex-comrade Agard, but finally allowed himself to be persuaded, and even ended by giving, by way of dowry, the commandery of Mosbourg, and making it a county. It was very doubtful whether the Prince had a right to make this donation at the time that he did so; but right was not looked after much more closely by givers than by receivers. And in this affair, by a curious inconsistency, the Prince, while making a count of M. Agard, imposed on him, before a notary, the condition never to avail him-

self of any title, or even to speak of his relationship to himself.

I had been advised to be sharp with M. Agard, and I was, perhaps, excessively so. His temper unhinged me. I was disgusted with his discretion, or, if you prefer it, dissimulation, which he carried so far as to try to conceal that he was an honest man. The Grand-duke, who had dreamed of the throne of Spain six months before he was sent elsewhere, had sold as much of the domains of the grand-duchy as he could, and more than he ought. He had anticipated the revenue falling due, and squeezed the orange that was slipping from his hand to the best of his ability. I brought out these facts: I looked into all their details, and I discovered that M. Agard had dealt largely on behalf of his master, but always with fidelity. Granting the right of sale, there was no blame to anyone.

While examining some portions of the correspondence of M. Agard with the Grand-duke, I saw that the latter sometimes introduced literary quotations. I mentioned my surprise to M. Agard, for I did not suppose General Murat to be much in advance of the rest on those subjects. M. Agard undeceived me by showing some portions of the "Æneid," translated into verse by the Grand-duke, and giving me unequivocal proofs of their paternity. I have since found means to convince myself that General Murat was a fair scholar, and had not forgotten his studies in spite of his prodigious military activity. It appeared that he had been bred by his family for the clerical profession, and that he owed to the Revolution the change to another, where he made a better display of the brilliant qualities with which nature had so generously endowed him.

The differences between M. Agard and myself were referred to the supreme arbiter, and M. Agard quitted the grand-duchy to take the place of Finance Minister at Naples. The Emperor did not consider that my zeal in

this matter had been exactly in accordance with rule, and passed a very sharp judgment on my conduct, which he charged his Minister to transmit to me. This was happily the Finance Minister, and he so much softened its sting that I hardly felt it. I had not sufficiently considered that, in treating M. Agard harshly, I should find the King of Naples at his back, which was something, and behind the King, or, rather, before him, the Queen, and that was much. The royal pair were about the Emperor, and had too many advantages over me, and, where I then was, I could not parry the blows, or even guess them.

Among the objects of strife between M. Agard and myself, I found the picture of the Battle of Aboukir, which the Grand-duke had caused to be brought to Düsseldorf. He had ordered the picture from Gros, and paid for it; so it was his property. The Emperor ordered me to make him a special report on this head, in which I was to detail my reasons for retaining this picture at Düsseldorf. I set forth that in reality I had considered this picture as evidence of one of the greatest achievements of the French in Egypt; and that was the reason it had received from the public the name of the Battle of Aboukir; that it had been exhibited at the Louvre as such, admired by Frenchmen and foreigners, and I could not suppose that such a picture could belong to any but the Emperor, as it is an indispensable portion of the series of monuments that will attest to posterity those prodigies of valour that the very witnesses can hardly believe. Only it might be considered just to indemnify the Grand-duke for what the picture had cost him. These reasons were not good for much; and having reconsidered this matter, without allowing myself to be prejudiced by the opinions formed of the picture, or by the name given to it, I had discovered that the painting, though most valuable as a

work of art, did not in real truth represent the Battle of Aboukir; at the utmost, only one incident of that day could be found in it, arranged, as was most natural, in accordance with the taste of the person who had ordered the picture. General Murat, splendidly mounted and equipped, was in the foreground, and attracted all the notice by his action with the group of the Pacha and his son. The Battle of Aboukir was so confusedly drawn in the middle distance that some effort was required to make out which side was victorious. Therefore this picture is not historical; it is only a family portrait that should take its place among the possessions of the Grand-duke, like any other. I could not have pleaded better if I had been desirous to obtain the restitution of the picture. Contrary to custom, the report was returned to me, with the decision in the Emperor's own hand on the margin; it was, "*The restoration approved as a family portrait.*" And I heard that the Emperor spoke of Gros' picture in those terms when he had to mention it.

At first my correspondence with the Emperor was placed in the department of the Minister of Finances (the Duke de Gaeta), and I could not have fallen into better hands. The Duke de Gaeta was one of the best men who ever obtained the Emperor's confidence. Even before the Revolution he had made some advance in the civil service—the only career then open to him. He was first clerk under M. de Vergennes, the director-general of taxes, and there displayed the qualities that he has never lost. Endued with an upright rather than broad intellect, exact, hard-working, careful in everything, in his business as well as his dress, a constant frequenter of the opera, scrupulous in performing his duties to society, unchangeable in his habits, full of reverence for power, a little reluctant to accept novelties,

under the old system he would have presented a perfect model of those senior clerks who neither were born nor died, because from generation to generation they were always precisely the same. M. Gaudin—for so he was then called—had passed through the Revolution without much molestation, offering his knowledge of business to whoever wanted it; working under the financier Cambon and the minister Ramel no otherwise than he would have done under M. de Fleury or M. de Calonne—a financial tool, and nothing more. However, M. Gaudin's reputation gradually increased with the restoration of social peace, and he had climbed so high as to have the direction of the Post Office entrusted to him by the Directory; and there the revolution of Brumaire found him.

When Bonaparte came into power, he was possessed with the idea that the Directory had understood nothing of finance, and had committed faults without number in it; and he endeavoured therefore at first to gather around him men who had known the old system, and were able to reproduce whatever in it might be good and still practicable. Consul Lebrun mentioned M. Gaudin, with whom he had formerly been connected; he said much in his favour, and no one spoke ill of him. Bonaparte appointed him Finance Minister. He showed himself just the man to serve under such a master. Bringing with him some good old notions, he put them forth without pretension, and abandoned them without resistance; besides introducing order everywhere, and cleansing the stables of Augeas from morning to night without giving himself out for a Hercules. To him are due the recovery of discipline in the administration of finance, the proper establishment of the public receipts, and laudable efforts to attain that noble object, a just distribution of taxation. The only blame that can be imputed to him on this head

is that he yielded to the suggestions of his friend Hennet on the subject of the register of the survey of lands, and caused an expense of hundreds of thousands to France for work, still incomplete, which would be difficult to bring to a conclusion, nor ever will be finished, so long as subordinate parts of it must continually be done over again to repair the breaches made in it by time. The Emperor had created him Duke, and never let slip an occasion of testifying his high opinion of him. The new duke used his favour without abusing it; and this is worth remarking, for his favourite foible would have led many into temptation. On the return of the Bourbons, the Duke de Gaeta, seemed quite ready for this new world—rather this old one. He had preserved everything, even to the dress. He alone had brought down French full dress through the Revolution—the pigeon-breasted coat, long sleeves, and curls *à la d'Artois*. He even had made no change in the two watch-chains and jingling bunch of seals. He might have served for master of the ceremonies to those members of the new court who appeared with the forgotten gold lace of the fashion of forty years before. The Bourbons might have recovered an excellent servant in the Duke de Gaeta; but the Abbé Louis had taken possession of the finances from the first moment of the restoration, and of necessity he considered any one an enemy who might have disputed this post with him, or, failing him, could occupy it. He did not spare the poor Duke de Gaeta or M. Mollien any reproaches. It was regarded as indisputable among the Abbé's friends that neither the one nor the other understood anything about finance, that they were only poor tools in the hand of their master, and that their genius was at Saint Helena. This opinion was sheer insolence, but it had the power to keep aloof two men who might have been usefully employed.

I had as much opportunity as any one of judging of the delicacy and kindness of the Duke of Gaeta's correspondence. He carried the work that I sent him to the Emperor, and gave his advice on it. Whenever the Emperor's decision was in conformity with my views, he felt no embarrassment; but if it chanced that the Emperor entertained a different opinion from mine, or blamed any step that I had taken, the Minister, who could not avoid informing me, did so with all possible consideration, and chose terms he thought fittest to console or reassure me. For instance, the Emperor had found fault with my excessive severity towards M. Agard, and his letter, which fell into my hands after the Restoration, contained, "Inform M. Beugnot that I do not want a reaction, and that I disapprove of his conduct. He ought to make a report, and await orders." This is the version I received: —"Monsieur le Comte, the Emperor informs me that it would have been more in accordance with his intentions if you had referred to his majesty for orders after examining the accounts furnished by M. Agard and giving your opinion upon them. As for the rest, M. Agard is in Paris, and I shall easily settle the points left at variance with him, as you have made them perfectly plain. So you will not have to trouble yourself any more about what occurred during the previous administration." It seemed as if by giving me the Duke of Gaeta as my correspondent at the beginning of my administration, and M. Rœderer at the end, the Emperor had wished to make me feel the pleasure and the pain of two opposite extremes.

It was somewhat of a position in Europe at that time to be a Frenchman, and it was a considerable one to be the Emperor's representative anywhere. With the sole exception that I could not have abused my position with impunity, I held in Germany the same position as the

ancient Roman proconsuls. There were the same respect and obedience on the part of the people, the same obsequiousness of the nobles, the same desire to please and obtain my favour. At that time we were under the charm of the peace of Tilsitt; the invincibility of the Emperor had not experienced any check. I came from Paris, where I had spent my life at his court, that is to say, in the midst of the memorable labours and fascinations of his reign. In his councils I had been able to admire near at hand this genius ruling over human thought. I thought he was born to hold fortune in his chains, and that it was quite a matter of course for nations to fall at his feet. The country that had fallen to my lot increased this feeling. Germany, always much addicted to the marvellous, took a long time to get rid of its admiration for the Emperor; at that time it was entirely devoted to the hero who had only need to breathe to make it lose confidence in that Prussian monarchy which had been unable to defend either the armies or recollections of Frederick the Great, united to the so long invincible legions of the successor of Peter the Great.

I presented myself in the grand-duchy under the sway of these ideas. I was not astonished at any amount of regard, and even respect, of which I was the object. However, I was not lulled asleep by these flattering delusions, but worked with remarkable zeal from morning to night, astonishing the inhabitants of the country, who did not know that the Emperor exercised the miracle of his actual presence upon his servants, however far they might be away from him. I thought I saw him before me when working in my study; and if this perpetual imagination sometimes inspired ideas above my scope, it still oftener preserved me from faults that arise from negligence or carelessness. One of the ancients has said

that much is to be gained in our conduct in life by keeping ourselves in thought in the presence of a superior man; and I am inclined to believe that the Emperor would not have been generally so well served had not every one of his servants continually seen him at his side, either from the precautions that he took, or from the influence of his name, which was daily repeated everywhere.

I had a perfectly honest confidence in the importance and stability of my position; but my disposition preserved me from the extravagances that might have prejudiced minds against me. I have some self-love, like all other men; but it is not excessive. I am more disposed to exaggerate the merits of others than to depreciate them. I love and seek out the good; and, at the bottom of my heart, I thought a great deal of the inhabitants of the grand-duchy; but there, as well as at Cassel, I made the mistake of speaking with levity in society of what Germans regard seriously, of seeing all with French eyes, and especially of giving the rein to my inclination to pleasantry. This last fault was what could least be forgiven: I should have succeeded more quickly and more pleasantly if I had been able to resist it.

CHAPTER X.

Gift of the Grand-duchy of Berg to Napoleon Louis—Le Duc de Bassano—M. Maret—M. Regnault—Organization of the Grand-ducal Government—Le Comte de Nesselrode—M. Fuschius—General Damas—Journey through the Grand-duchy—Secrets of German Diplomacy—Threatennigs of War—Humiliation of Prussia—Major Schill—Battle of Essling—Le Duc de Brunswick-Oels—Battle of Wagram.

DURING the first six months of my administration business went on easily. I followed the steps of the old government, and interfered with neither persons nor things. The inhabitants were pleased, and the Emperor's interest did not suffer. I should have desired to continue some time on the same footing, and only to introduce alterations one after the other, and in moderation. I should especially have desired to preserve such old institutions as flattered the pride of the inhabitants without any injury to the order or despatch of business. I was continually finding opportunities of applying this system, and of explaining it to the Duke de Gaeta in my correspondence with him. This Minister shared my opinion from the bottom of his heart, and left me all the liberty compatible with fear that the Emperor might see matters otherwise.

I considered myself too happy in having fallen under this kind supervision, and I prayed Heaven that I might so remain for a long time. My prayers were not heard, for in the first days of 1809 I was informed that the Emperor had decided that the Secretary of State for the Empire should perform the same functions for the grand-

duchy of Berg. A little while afterwards his majesty issued a decree declaring that he made a gift of the grand-duchy to Napoleon Louis, eldest son of the King of Holland, a boy who promised remarkable ability, and to whom he bore a very close affection, that seemed well accounted for.

Since I was to lose the Duke of Gaeta I could not have fallen into better hands than those of the Duke of Bassano. We had stepped forth together on the great stage of the Revolution. My antecedents, and the easy circumstances of my family, had at first given me the advantage over him. I was a member of the Legislative Assembly when he was no more than reporter of the debates for the *Moniteur;* but I was politically ruined on the day of the 10th of August, while M. Maret easily passed through it, being as yet unknown except by his remarkable power of furnishing the orators in the assemblies with the sense they had omitted in their speeches. However, it was natural that he who had so much sense at the service of others should desire to make use of it on his own account. When M. Maret offered himself for public employment, many friends came to his assistance, whom he had gained by means of the *Moniteur*; besides, he had an excellent heart, and was naturally disposed to everything good. His mind was cultivated, and, if business had not taken him away from literature, he would have been a literary man in good estimation, if not in the first rank. His greatest talent consisted in a remarkable facility in expressing the ideas of others; and he employed it so much in reporting for the *Moniteur* and other work of the same kind, that his mind seemed, as it were, absorbed in it. The Abbé Siéyès at first procured the place of Secretary to the Consulate for him. He was displeasing to the First Consul at the outset for the very same qualities that afterwards made him so much esteemed—his

obsequiousness, his eagerness, and his propensity to obliterate himself in the minds of others; but in proportion as the First Consul arrogated authority to himself, and became accustomed to wield it alone, he became reconciled to the Secretary of the Consulate. The despotic power of the one, and the favour he showed to the other, increased in equal proportion, and the Duke de Bassano ended by being absorbed into the Emperor; and it was to him a kind of additional sense by which to manifest to the common herd his determinations quick as lightning. Indeed, there are no terms that justly express with what attention, what ease and rapidity, the orders of the Emperor, which were communicated to the Secretary of State by words that flew as fast as signs, received complexion, sense, and interpretation, and hastened forth to rule in all the corners of the vast empire, without delay, remonstrance, or remark; and this entire self-abnegation cost the Duke of Bassano nothing. Having been so long completely prostrate before the Emperor's genius, he thought him infallible. This explains the reproaches that were addressed to him, when the times became unpropitious. He was accused of having always dissuaded the Emperor from treating with the coalition—of having opposed the Congress of Prague—of having neutralized that of Chatillon; but, in spite of all these defeats, the Emperor was far from feeling himself defeated. He awaited his enemies on the heights of Montmartre, and thus it was supreme injustice to expect the Duke of Bassano to think differently; and I do not know that he even dared once to do so, even when he was weeping over his master in the court at Fontainebleau.

But during the fifteen years of favour—or, to speak more correctly, of success—the Duke of Bassano cannot be reproached with a single bad action; and a great number of persons can be called to bear witness to this.

Very few men have been placed in such a position of whom as much might be said. If he laid himself open to some slight ridicule, it did not arise from his high rank, but from his peculiarity. He plumed himself on the beauty of his figure and the grace of his deportment, and even pretended to be a *bel esprit*. There really was some vanity at the bottom of this, but not amounting to pride or haughtiness. When he wished to marry, he had already attained to a remarkable amount of favour, and might have raised his views pretty high. A large number of families, even in the most exclusive faubourgs, would have vied with one another for the pleasure of adopting him; but he sought his wife at Dijon, the city of his birth; he selected her from among his own family, and she was not wealthy, though really young, pretty, and not without good sense.

The Duke of Bassano had no doubt persons to envy him, but no enemies; but he watched with pain the ever-increasing ascendancy that Regnauld de Saint Jean d'Angely took in the Council of State. The mould of the latter's mind was quite different: he had as much facility in working, and was as unwearied in it, as the Duke of Bassano; but his ease was not compliance: he was like a vigorous steed restrained by a strong hand, champing the bit, and always ready to break loose. M. Regnauld possessed qualities of the first order; he had rendered himself a correct writer, an eloquent orator, and, what I never remarked in any other person, even when he had nearly reached his fiftieth year he still made rapid progress; his mind was just and penetrating, and the most complicated affairs were sport to him. With power of toil at will, he would pass the night over a portfolio of the Council of State, would compose a lecture for the Academy in the morning, rush to his mistress, and be among the first arrivals at St.

Cloud; but, as may well be supposed, he had the defects that combine with his qualities, and gave way to them so freely as sometimes to border on excess. And he had retained a tincture of vulgarity from his earlier years; in him the upstart was betrayed by little vanities, boastfulness, and sometimes by inexcusable proceedings. The Emperor, who saw him every day, valued him at his worth; and though assuredly no man came under his hand better suited to become at will a good Minister of the Interior, of Justice, or of Finance, he had inwardly decided in his heart that this should never be; and poor Regnauld had the pain of seeing himself passed over in favour of Champagny, Cretet, and Montalivet, whose three capacities might have been all united, without being a match for his. The Emperor left him in the post of president of the section of Home Affairs in the Council of State, and added important missions that were more or less in the department of the council. He had made him Secretary of State of the Imperial Household, had loaded him with orders; he had received very large rewards, and had a large salary. The Emperor seemed to say to him at every turn, "Whatever you please, but never a minister."

The Duke of Bassano, knowing this feeling of the Emperor's, wished to profit by it, and looked out for some one to take Regnauld's place and send him to the Senate. He thought well enough of me to suppose that I could. He was wrong; but I stood well enough in his regard to be glad to be placed in correspondence with him; and as a Secretary of State at Paris was necessary to the administration of the grand-duchy, that administration felt itself honoured in this Secretary of State being that of the empire. I was not long in feeling that the eyes of the master were upon me. A table of statistics of the duchy was required of me, a project for the organisation

of such government as it would be desirable to establish there, in order to prepare for the speedy introduction of the French code. I was to bring the receipts and expenditure into the system introduced in the imperial treasury, and to send a detailed report every week of anything that might interest the Emperor throughout the grand-duchy and the circles of Germany in postal communication.

I asked for delay on some points, such as the introduction of the code, the preparation of statistics, &c.; but I sent a project of organisation of government. I proposed a minister to preside at once over Justice, the Home Office, and Public Education, a Finance Minister, a Minister-at-War, chief commandant of the troops, a Council of State of ten members; at the head of the machine a commissioner of the Emperor, as principal minister, president of the Council of the Ministers and of the Council of State, who should decide on pressing or important matters, and communicate with Paris on any others, with his opinion and the reasons for it, and proposed orders. The imperial commissioner should keep in his own hands the administration of the Prince's domains, and should himself prepare the budget, and go every year to lay it before the Emperor, after presenting it to the Council of State. The secondary administrations consisted of the general direction of the customs, post-office, registration, and public lands, organised after the French system by M. Agard. I preserved them, and added an office for waters and forests, which had hitherto remained under the Grand Huntsman, and an office for direct taxation, that should immediately prepare a survey.

I received neither censure nor approval of my plans; nor indeed any answer at all. So I took upon myself to carry out provisionally all I had proposed as to subordinate administrations. I organised the treasury of the

grand-duchy on the model, on a small scale, of that of France; for I knew that the Emperor would not have excused any delay on this head, and that I needed rules for myself. Gradually the machine got into regular motion, and went on smoothly.

Count Nesselrode, Minister of the Interior, was the head of the family of Nesselrode, one of the most ancient in Germany, and capable of furnishing most distinguished members of the diplomatic body. He himself was first cousin, once removed, to the Nesselrode who was Minister of Foreign Affairs in Russia, and whom we had seen in Paris. He was not without culture or zeal, nor did he make any objection to French ideas or forms of government. Like almost all in his station, he was burdened with great ill-managed estates, loaded with debts, and not bold enough to attend to either. A true gentleman in the best sense of the word, he frankly supported measures damaging to his private interest when he saw they were for the public good; and thus he enjoyed true popularity. I left to him, nearly uncontrolled, the direction of all municipal matters; and he managed them quite paternally. I suppose it was a good way of softening the foreign yoke in the eyes of the Germans to set over this section of affairs, which comes into daily action, a man of name, who spoke their own language, shared their tastes, and even weaknesses, and whose example was a reply to all prejudice.

M. Fuschius, the Minister of Justice, was a bourgeois whom nothing in the world would have persuaded that he could be the equal of Count Nesselrode; and he therefore remained his subordinate, and I saw no reason against it. He was a thorough Bavarian lawyer, honest, industrious, a tolerable scholar, of patriarchal manners, but so slow of mind that it was impossible to me to work with him.

General Damas had all the business connected with the army. Damas was a hero of the earlier days, whose good luck had been lost through a serious blunder. He entered the service in 1790, and was aide-de-camp to General Maunier at the first passage of the Rhine, where he received a wound. Pursuing his career in the following years, he had passed through the different grades, and then shared in the famous expedition to Egypt in the position of chief of the staff to General Kleber, whose intimate friend he became. History has already told how the commander-in-chief of this army left it on a sudden, and without having given notice to General Kleber, who was to command in his absence. Kleber was one of the greatest captains of an age when there were so many. Homer never dreamed of a figure in which ardour and courage were more nobly delineated; and a lofty, firm, and generous mind animated this splendid form. Kleber passionately loved the Republic, because it was the only government that could satisfy his noble ambition. It was all for his country's liberty and glory, and he believed that this could only be attained through respect to the laws and making a religion of duty. He saw with much indignation how Bonaparte had trifled with this by leaving his army. He took the command because it was necessary, but at the same time denounced Bonaparte's flight to the Directory. He himself had dictated the words of this denunciation in the spirit of antique severity. Although Damas was a man of understanding, he was not of the mould to produce anything like this; but, as chief of the staff, he signed the despatch, and addressed it to the Directory. While the packet was crossing the seas the Directory had ceased to exist, and was replaced by the Consulate. It was Bonaparte, the First Consul, who opened the packet containing the denunciation of his flight from Egypt.

Manebat altâ mente repôstum. However, during the lifetime of Kleber, who so splendidly upbore the heavy burden that had been shifted off upon him, and in whom was likewise discernible a formidable adversary to certain ulterior projects, the Consul dissembled. But when his good fortune had relieved him of Kleber, and the shattered forces that composed the expedition to Egypt regained their native soil, poor Damas, who had returned with no resources save his sword, could not escape the resentment so long concentrated upon him. His name was erased from the muster-rolls of the army, and he was left in the streets of Paris with a wife and children. Even there he had not the comfort of being forgotten. Once he was arrested and confined in the Temple for having too publicly spoken in praise of Kleber, since such a eulogium implied a censure of the First Consul. Set at liberty by the care of his friend General Belliard, he was arrested again a short time afterwards, as being supposed likely to have taken part in Moreau's affray. The proceedings furnished no proof against him. It became necessary to restore him to liberty again; that is to say, to neglect and poverty. Murat, who, like all really courageous men, had a generous heart, ventured to hold out his hand to him, and sent him into the grand-duchy of Berg to command the troops there. And there I found him; but as his position became perilous as soon as the Emperor resumed the government of the country, I advised him to go to Naples, where Murat was ready to welcome him. The first soldiers of the Revolution bore an almost passionate attachment to their country. Damas could never resolve to pass the Alps, and only entreated my promise to do all I could to reconcile him with the Emperor, to keep him in the grand-duchy, now in some sort a part of France. This was not the work of a day; for, the first time I mentioned his name, the Emperor said,

"He has remained in the grand-duchy; very well! All that I can do for him is to forget him." And yet Damas was a well-trained officer, modest, of tried resolution, and of the same school as Kleber, Hoche, and Marceau.

I managed matters to the best of my abilities and understanding, for I seldom received replies from the Duke of Bassano. When, in 1809, I had a month at my own disposal, I used it in visiting the grand-duchy, leaving Düsseldorf on the 28th of May, and not returning till the 1st of July. I studied the manufactures of Elberfeld, Barmen, Roustorf, Lunen, Romscheit, Solingen, &c., in all their details.

During this journey—a rather rapid one—I had only cast a superficial glance over the grand-duchy. I only wished to perceive for myself the condition of affairs it would be desirable to bring about. I had projects for frequently repeating my visits. I could estimate the value of each prefect by making him give explanations in the very localities and in presence of the objects of my interrogations. I perceived that our hands were good, and MM. de Bock and Rumberg and others promised to be distinguished magistrates. I gave them the instructions that I had prepared for the first prefects of the Empire ten years before, with the corrections dictated by experience or rendered necessary by the difference of the places added to them.

The advices I received, the disdainful tone affected by the newspapers published in the Confederation of the Rhine in speaking of France, a general recall of all military men on leave in the states of Austria, showed me that a fresh struggle between that power and France was approaching. I feared that the day of peace was already past, and betook myself to Benrath, a castle so near Düsseldorf that business was as promptly despatched

in the one place as in the other. I soon learned that war was inevitable, that it was closely approaching, and that Austria was making an extraordinary display of force in hopes of surpassing that of the Emperor, one portion of whose forces was supposed to be employed in subjugating Spain, and another in guarding Italy. I at once called for General Damas, with whom I determined on the preparations and measures of precaution that were in our power. When I reached Düsseldorf, in the middle of the previous year, I found in full force the renown for invincibility acquired by the Emperor on the fields of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena. I was in the age of ambition, and the road seemed open before me, broad and strewn with flowers. I could have no more doubts of my fortune than of the Emperor's. Before crossing the Rhine, I had traversed the fertile champaign of the Röer. It was animated by the joyful and varied scenes that are everywhere produced by harvest. The weather was magnificent, and I can still recall the sort of intoxication that I felt at crossing this eternally famous river, now brought beneath our yoke by our victories. It was then a matter of difficulty for a soldier or a servant of Napoleon to be modest,—the utmost that could be expected of him was not to be insolent; but this charming state of mind—I may add, *excessively* charming—was of short duration. The defeat of General Dupont at Baylen, and the shameful circumstances attending it, caused a rapid and profound sensation in the minds of foreigners. The mask had fallen; they saw that it was possible to defeat us, and they had no further thoughts but of conflict.

I was well situated for watching some secrets of German diplomacy. The postal privilege of the grand-duchy extended to the Hanse Towns, and I received a great deal of news from Hamburg, of which, as usual, the greater

part was conjecture, the lesser, fact. The principal families of the grand-duchy had sons in the Austrian service, and received letters from them; and something in them always transpired, in spite of all the care to conceal the contents from the French. For my part, at Düsseldorf I no more neglected any means of discovering secrets interesting to the Emperor than others did elsewhere. I had been well served, and in the earlier months of 1809 I had informed him of the warlike frenzy that had seized on the family of the Emperor of Austria, recommending no credence to be given to any interpretation that the cabinet of Vienna might give of its open preparations when saying that they had no intention of attacking France, only preparing for defence. The Emperor ordered me to send in a fortnightly report of the state of the grand-duchy, as well as of anything that had come to my knowledge from the rest of Germany. It would have been a serious offence if these returns had been late, yet I never had any opportunity of knowing at what rate he estimated this work. Indeed, when, later, I carried to him, at Mayence, reports, only too exact, of the defection of Bavaria and the Austrian change of politics, he received them very ill, and harshly reproached me with antechamber diplomacy. However, the next day he was on his road to the army.

On the 3rd of March, 1809, the Emperor had granted the Grand-duchy of Berg, by letters-patent, to the eldest son of the King of Holland. This measure had a bad effect: the inhabitants of the grand-duchy beheld in it their future union with Holland, and dreaded being one day called on to share the burden of its enormous debt. King Louis, on his side, did his best to confirm this prevision of evil, by saying, in his speech to the Chambers, that in this measure the men of Holland should perceive the Emperor's intention to indemnify them for the losses they

had suffered. I certainly was very far from sharing this general mistake. I knew that the Emperor had natural motives for wishing well to the eldest son of the King of Holland, and that he had desired to give him something more positive than a crown which had no real hold. Nothing so certain could be deduced from the fact, as it seemed to me, as that from that time the Emperor was arranging a fresh destiny for Holland. I did not dare to give this explanation to anyone. I answered all who came to ask particulars of me, that the cession made by the Emperor was the most fortunate thing for the grand-duchy; and, that no doubt might remain in people's minds, I had a *Te Deum* sung, and gave as magnificent a *fête* as the place would admit of.

At the same time I was informed that war was determined on in the cabinet of Vienna; and that a last effort had been resolved on for raising the whole of Germany against France. Men of importance, such as those generally employed by the cabinet of Vienna, were dispersed in different places throughout Germany to feel their way. A commandant, De Kaunitz, son of the famous minister, had fallen to our lot, but he had nothing of his father but the name. I could always find out the truth by assuming the contrary to whatever he uttered. My conjectures were confirmed by an able man, my correspondent at Hamburg; and I sent a courier, who did not find the Emperor in Paris: he was on the Spanish expedition. He hurried off like a flash of lightning, beat the Austrians, who had been making preparations for three years, with the troops he found on his road, and was at the gates of Vienna itself when Vienna was determined to believe that he had not left Spain.

At the same time I received orders, one after the other, to levy men, and to forward everything disposable I could pick up to the grand army. I had to leave all

other work, and employ myself exclusively on military matters. The Emperor's marvellous swiftness was indeed a necessity.

The turn taken by the war in Spain was undermining our credit in Germany. The princes of the Confederation in public followed our standards, but their people's secret wishes were against us. One of the princes said to me, "How long do you expect us to go on with your never-ending victories? We preserve the honour of our arms, and exhaust the blood of our people." Prussia, as was natural, played the first part in this concert of hatred.

Perhaps our conquering hand had been laid too heavily upon them; perhaps we had to blame ourselves for having wounded them in those delicate points that remain sacred even among enemies. At the bottom of the heart of every Prussian was not only a need but a rage for vengeance against everything that bore the French name. The Court of Prussia, by leaving Berlin for Königsberg, had opened the floodgates to the universal hatred that was boiling over in the capital. Young men of distinguished families organised themselves into bands of adventurers, and took oaths to fall upon the French anywhere and everywhere. A Major Schill managed to carry off his whole regiment on this novel crusade; and among his companions was numbered a son of General Blücher. This general himself, whose retirement from the service was not in earnest, was the soul of the enterprise. His plan was to allow the movement to begin, and to join it soon afterwards with all the troops he might find disposed to follow him. Schill, when drilling his regiment on the parade at Berlin, would call for the sabre-cut to *strike off a Frenchman's head*, and how to be ready for *another Frenchman's head*. All this was done in broad day, when Prussia had become an ally

after the treaty of Tilsit, when we had a minister at Berlin, and an army at the gates. But there was in all Prussia only one man really honest in the wish to preserve peace. The army had been destroyed, the monarchy dismembered, and the king humiliated; but a new power had arisen from this extremity of misfortune, namely, that of the nation, which would consent to its own ruin, and dashed blindly into every mode of resistance. Major Schill's declaration of war could produce nothing but brigandage; but it gave us an idea of what we had to expect from a country where such a thing could take place with impunity. Schill had become a hero beforehand. The fashionable ladies of Berlin wore his picture or cypher attached to an iron necklace of light and elegant design. Their saying was, "Prussia will raise herself again with iron; it is wanted everywhere, even on women's breasts." The fashion of iron ornaments for ladies dates from this period. The Prussian ladies had introduced them at home from a very praiseworthy feeling, and they were adopted not only by the rest of Germany, as was natural enough, but even by France, against which they had been invented. So true it is that there is nothing that caprice will not take up, and fashion justify.

Major Schill crossed the Elbe in the first days of May; his direction was towards Halle and Allerstadt, somewhat near the grand-duchy. I was not without uneasiness about the department formed of the old county of La Marck, where I knew he had correspondents. The army of the grand-duchy was all abroad,—part in the grand army, part in Spain. My remaining resources were the gendarmerie, the regimental depôts, and a company of veterans. General Damas formed two strong detachments out of them, and proceeded to post them at Rheda and Lipstadt, the two points most threatened, because

they were those by which Schill could most easily penetrate. This miserable little war was so far dangerous that wherever it extended it put forth as a watch-word the extermination of the French, while the Emperor was engaged with all the powers of the Austrian monarchy.

I was thus surrounded with subjects for disquiet, and I had nothing to oppose to them but my confidence in the Emperor's genius. Such was my state of mind when I received a courier that the Secretary of State had sent off to me, on the 6th of May, the day after the battle of Essling. The Minister's letter was a long one, and all in his own hand; it contained a history of the battle of the day before, and represented it as a victory obtained without difficulty. The despatch was very artfully written. So much precaution in its preparation, so much care in ensuring its reaching me, were just the thing to awaken my suspicions. I read the letter twenty times, and, through considering it, thought it safer to believe what was omitted in it than what was written, and that the Secretary of State's factitious joy covered a real defeat. I decided at once what to do. I prepared the bulletin of a victory, more clear and more decided than the letter of the Duke of Bassano. I forwarded it to all parts of Germany to which the posts of the grand-duchy extended, and I sent couriers in other directions, into Holland, and even to the left bank of the Rhine. I impudently affirmed that the Emperor had addressed this bulletin to me from the field of battle. I deemed it requisite to seize the initiative, and in this I was not mistaken. Two days had scarcely passed before a flood of letters of a very different stamp poured from all quarters into the grand-duchy. All in honour and honesty, the eldest son of the Minister of Home Affairs was colonel of the Berg regiment of chasseurs, and his younger son colonel of Lichtenstein's regiment of hussars, which belonged to the Austrian

army. After the battle of Essling the younger Count Nesselrode sent his father a detailed account of the contest, managing very cleverly to conceal from me the intelligence which I had, so to speak, as soon as he. I saw that our loss had been great, and that it was only by Marshal Massena's systematic intrepidity that the French army had escaped a complete defeat. I believed this letter, for I knew that he who wrote it was a distinguished man, and that exaggeration was foreign to his nature.

The joy of the Austrian party at Düsseldorf was great. They made pilgrimages to the Home Office of the grand-duchy, to read the famous despatch of the Minister's son there. I became annoyed, and had then resolved on a courteous request to Count Nesselrode to return his portfolio; but I suspended this measure for fear of the shock that it would cause at a moment when I was myself, so to speak, at sea. I thought it better to wait for the end of the campaign, and by that time it was not necessary; for young Count Nesselrode perished at the head of his regiment on the field of Wagram. A very different feeling succeeded to my dissatisfaction. The unhappy father could not communicate his loss to me, nor could I mention it to him; but I seized every indirect means in my power of evincing my sympathy without the least dissimulation. The young count deserved the regrets of all parties, for he was an amiable man, full of loyalty, without hatred or prejudice against us,—in a word, a generous enemy. He one day said to me, "My brother is well off, for he is one of you: I serve in the Austrian army—the place for younger sons."

In spite of my bulletin, the battle of Essling was considered a defeat, and the agitation became general in Germany. Prussia thought she would be delivered as speedily as she had been enslaved. Every state, even to Denmark, assumed a hostile attitude, without any

assignable reason except the perpetual English intrigues. Sweden was no better disposed; and the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine, whose soldiers swelled our legions, secretly cherished the hope of speedy deliverance from their harsh protector. The conflagration was so threatening that the Prince-Primate thought himself, or was, obliged to address a political pastoral address to the confederate princes, in which he laid it down that the Emperor had gained the victory, that he would not cease to gain it; and things would turn out for the best, for the good of the world, and of the Confederation of the Rhine in particular. If at this critical moment, between the battles of Essling and Wagram, Russia had made one sign, no one can tell what would have happened; but such was still the ascendancy of the Emperor's person, that after the day of Essling, and in the perilous situation of the island of Lobau, he was singly a match for fortune, till by his incredulity he had overcome her.

All Germany had its eyes fixed on this island of Lobau. Would it be the grave of the French army, or would Napoleon's eagle escape victorious? I was much disturbed by the opinions of professional persons, who, whether French or Germans, were agreed as to the danger of the position. No one believed that the Emperor would find in the island of Lobau resources to refit his army and resume the offensive; and still less was it believed that the Archduke Charles would allow him to do so.

Major Schill caused me no more uneasiness, as his expeditions were self-interested. Above all, he had abandoned his march to the grand-duchy in order to proceed towards the Hanseatic towns, which offered a richer booty, easier to come by. Pursued by a Dutch division under command of General Gratien, he was overtaken in the town of Stralsund itself, where, after a vigorous defence,

his band was dispersed, and he himself was killed in action, with a courage worthy of a better cause.

The partisans of Schill at once found means to rally round another banner—that of the Duke of Brunswick-Oels. This prince had made his way into Saxony at the head of a division partly composed of Austrian regular troops, partly of those adventurers who spring up in long wars, and offer themselves to any party that will pay them. His aim was to recover the patrimony of his house, which the Emperor had seized on to include in the kingdom of Westphalia. With this project he rapidly crossed Saxony, and even penetrated to the capital of his former dominions. He ought not to have stopped then, but to have marched straight on Wesel, passing through the grand-duchy. I was in no less dread of the approach of the Duke of Brunswick than I had been of that of Major Schill; for his troops had committed all sorts of excesses at Leipsic and at Halle. He had entitled them "the Army of Vengeance," and had given them uniforms in conformity therewith, namely—a black suit bordered with death's heads and human bones in white embroidery. He exacted a horrible oath from them; and the worst of it was that this lugubrious equipment acted in scenes that it seemed only to threaten. Frenchmen accidentally captured, and for the most part unarmed, had been pitilessly massacred. The chief of the expedition, who was not without courage or audacity, kept the field for a month, up to the 7th of August, when being enclosed on all sides by the King of Westphalia's troops, which were four times more numerous, he threw himself into the Duchy of Oldenburg, and there embarked with his band to join the English in Walcheren.

When he passed through Brunswick in his flight from our troops, he would not dismount at his father's palace,

but slept in the open road on the rampart, lying on a bundle of straw. His courage was not daunted by the signature of the armistice with Austria. Abandoned by those who had thrust him forward, he found resources in himself. It was through a thousand dangers that he went to join the banners of the only power that hated the French with hatred equal to his own. I could not refrain from a kind of admiration of the man who gave an example of such perseverance to cowed and vanquished Europe; and yet, instructed by the *Moniteur*, I was forced to brand him with the name of brigand in my reports to the Emperor.

This prince was the son of that Duke of Brunswick who allowed his name to be placed at the foot of the famous declaration of July, 1792, so fatal to the cause of the emigrants. He was not the author of it. This was in fact a certain Abbé Limon, an intriguer of the first water, who after deserting the Orléans party had carried his zeal into that of the counter-revolution. The terms in which this manifesto was couched were a contrast to the former well-known temper of the duke, a fortunate brother-in-arms and friend of Frederick the Great. He professed the same philosophical opinions, and shared his taste for literature and art. In consequence of the smallness of his dominions he had been able to maintain there a paternal government, the foundations of which were in his own heart. He was adored by his subjects; his acts of charity were not reckoned up, for it would have been an endless repetition. Intelligence, probity, devotion to the public good were titles to his favour, and at a time when the Jews were shamefully persecuted in Germany he had placed a merchant of Brunswick, named Jacobson, on his council of state,—a Jew, and attached to his religion, but a virtuous man and a philanthropist.

The high consideration enjoyed by the Duke of

Brunswick in Germany had withstood the unhappy discomfiture in the plains of Champagne. It was known that he had been deceived from the beginning on the nature of the intended war. When he returned to his dominions no one showed himself more helpful to the emigrants in general; and besides, he had opened at his court an asylum for French families of rank with whom he had been acquainted in happier times, and seemed to have cured them of longing to return by his delicate attentions; for I found them still in Brunswick when I went to take possession for the King of Westphalia. In 1806 the romantic party of the court of Berlin desired war at all costs against France. The Duke of Brunswick opposed it, and threw the weight of his renown into the balance. The King listened, and from confidence in him kept the determination some time in suspense. The old warrior was at last overcome in the council, and only obtained by his long resistance the derisive title of *Prince of Peace*, which was once affixed behind his carriage on a journey from Berlin to Brunswick. The duke hoped at least from the notoriety of his repugnance that if war should be declared he should be excused from taking a share in it, and he was again mistaken. Three days before the commencement of the campaign, when all the preliminary dispositions had been made by Prince Louis of Prussia, the king announced to the Duke of Brunswick that war was declared, and ordered him to come and take the command of the army. He obeyed, complaining of not having been sooner informed, nor was he long in perceiving for himself the justice of the complaint, for he had an enemy before him who never let himself be long waited for. The Emperor rushed upon Prussia like lightning, and on his way thrust a sword into the vitals of the Duke of Brunswick, who was trying to manœuvre to take up

a position after the tactics of the old school. He was forced to accept battle at Jena and Auerstadt, and the Prussians were everywhere crushed.

The Duke of Brunswick received, at Jena, a wound which deprived him of sight, and was not long in proving mortal. He was withdrawn from the field of battle in a pitiable condition, but he chose to resume his journey to Brunswick that same night. Not a complaint had escaped him, not a simple word unworthy of himself. He said to the surgeon who dressed his wound, "I shall always be blind. Well, that is not so bad at my age." The castle of Brunswick re-echoed with lamentations when he was brought thither. His minister in charge, from whom I received these details, entreated him not to remain there, since the French would arrive in twenty-four hours. "That is rather soon," replied the duke; "but what is the good of flying from them?" "His highness does not know what he is exposing himself to." "I will tell you," replied the prince. "I have long known the French better than you. They will respect an old general wounded on the field of battle. The officers will give balls, and go to the theatre; the soldiers will kiss the girls a little. Take care of the billets, and see that they want nothing. I feel sure that there is a courier of the Emperor's on the road to know how I am." *Non erat hoc tempus.* No matter, this trustfulness of noble minds is indeed the most touching thing in the world. Why must policy needs be compelled to betray it? Next day the minister, prompted by information that he received from all quarters, returned to the charge, urging the necessity of a speedy departure. The duke continued to resist, and only yielded on being told by his minister that his presence at Brunswick would be a pretext for aggravating the horrors of military occupation. Then he consented to be carried elsewhere, saying,

"I feel that I am too weak to bear a long journey; but if my presence here is likely to add to the misfortune of my subjects, I must leave the place, and I hesitate no longer."

The first day the weakness kept on increasing. On the second the Duke of Brunswick had ceased to live. I reproached good M. Wolfrad for having recommended this departure. I much fear that the information which alarmed him came to him from very high quarters, where the deprivation of the unfortunate duke was already determined.

I lived on the alert. After the alarms given me by Major Schill and the Duke of Brunswick, came the descent of the English upon the island of Walcheren. I received information that, on the 29th of July the English had shown themselves with a fleet of a hundred and thirty transports, and twenty-five men-of-war, off the town of Veere. I could not believe it, because I could not credit that the preparations for such an important expedition had not long ago aroused the attention of the only power that could be threatened. But the day after the fleet was reported, Lord Chatham, who commanded the land forces, had effected his landing at Bresaut, had seized the forts of Haak and Orscapel, and was marching upon Flushing. The expedition had three objects: first, the capture of Flushing; then the burning of the port of Antwerp and the fleet there shut up; lastly, the importation of a considerable quantity of English goods. The two first objects were not accomplished. The Antwerp fleet ascended the river high enough to be sheltered from insult. Five thousand men threw themselves into Flushing, and made a vigorous defence. Lord Chatham was not fortunate in any of the partial actions in which his position compelled him to engage. Disease ravaged his army, and this expedition, which

had started so splendidly, and had been hailed by so many hopes as it left the English ports, returned lightened of great numbers of the troops it had carried, and with the shame of a complete failure. The goods of English manufacture, that held a considerable place in the expedition, apparently remained on the Continent; but the expense of carriage and escort had been too enormous for England on the whole to find it a profitable speculation.

The 5th of July came. On this day fortune, which had seemed to hesitate for some time, fully returned to her favourite. Wagram was a decisive victory, whatever may have been said, and the proof is the treaty of Vienna that followed it. I made use of my intimate connection with the Secretary of State to lay before the Emperor, just when he was about to arrange the conditions of peace, a claim from the country of Münster against Austria for an old debt, which was not contested, but only opposed at Vienna by the eternal clog of protocols. An undertaking to pay the debt immediately on the part of the Emperor of Austria was placed in the ninth article of the treaty of Vienna, and the grand-duchy was proud of possessing a sovereign who placed the partly domestic interests of his subjects on the same level with the most lofty political arrangements.

Two great events, in rapid succession, re-established beyond the Rhine the credit of the Emperor's power: the victory of Wagram and Lord Chatham's departure from the island of Walcheren. Men were surprised to see that the Emperor had so easily repulsed an attack so long in preparation upon a point distant from the centre of his states, and at a moment when he himself had to strive with all the forces of the Austrian empire on the banks of the Danube, and in Spain against the whole Peninsula, assisted by England. Some persons

believed that there was an immense though unperceived advantage for France at the bottom of the treaty of Vienna. The Emperor had given reason to believe that it would not be his fault if this treaty were not the last. Warned by the difficulties, or rather perils, that he had just encountered, he seemed disposed to venture no longer the fate of France and its inhabitants on the turn of a card. He had been heard among a circle of generals to deplore the distant expeditions in which he always lost some of the companions of his earlier days, and had added, "I have had enough of acting the soldier; it is time for me to act the king." He repeated that, according to old custom, he would have his great and little journeys; the great ones to Compiègne or Fontainebleau, the little ones to Saint Cloud and Meudon. Would that Heaven but had granted, and France likewise, that mercy to him; but the time for these charms of peace was not yet come! Not that I thought, like several of those most about the Emperor's person, that war was to him an imperious necessity of nature; but I thought that no real peace could be made anywhere, or with anyone, as long as the Emperor had not signed one with England. The foundation of his policy was to obtain such a peace. To that purpose he used the gigantic means of which each will give his own account. It will be plain that it was not in the Emperor's power to stop; while, on the contrary, he traversed the steppes of the North in warrior guise in order that he might rest securely in the thickets of Trianon or on the enchanted heights of St. Cloud.

CHAPTER XI.

Administration of the Grand-duchy—M. de Semonville—The Waters of Aix-la-Chapelle—The Court of Madame Mère—The King of Holland—La Princesse Borghèse—Divorce of the Empress Josephine—Surprising effect, in Germany, of Napoleon's Second Marriage—Introduction of the Civil Code into the Grand-duchy—M. Rœderer—Studies in Political Economy—A Miracle.

I TOOK advantage of the Emperor's return to Paris, and the general respite from military operations that prevailed, to petition for the laws of organisation that were requisite for the government and administration of the grand-duchy. All that bore on serfage or feudal rights had been suppressed; and I took the opportunity of introducing the civil code and an analogous judicial order. I distributed the objects of government, as in France, into seven principal divisions: customs; registration and stamps; post; waters, woods, and mines; direct taxes; indirect taxes; and the prince's domain. I applied the French system to each of these divisions, always, however, reducing it into due proportion to the purpose for which it was destined. I traced rules to be followed by the Council of State and the Ministers. Thus the machine had received all the springs, and all that remained was to set it going and maintain it. I began by the regulation of the department without which there is no safety in administration—the finances. I presented the accounts of the year 1808, and a regular budget for 1809. I finished the work of the year with one of the most urgent and most difficult tasks

that had come before me—the introduction of the franc as the monetary denomination in all public accounts, and the application of the tariff arranged for the French departments on the left bank to all the moneys that circulated in the grand-duchy. I had taken the precaution of causing this measure to be requested from me, and had myself discussed its merits in the public prints, so as to prepare public opinion for it. Nevertheless I dreaded some disturbance in the markets, because the proportion I had adopted considerably reduced the nominal value of the copper coinage, which constitutes the ever-circulating treasure of the most numerous class of society. There was, however, no murmuring, for it had been everywhere felt that French administration could not allow a disorder to exist on the right bank of the Rhine, which it had allayed on the left, to the satisfaction of the commercial interest, and even of all classes of society.

The first eighteen months of my stay in the grand-duchy were a time of anxieties at times very poignant, diversified by triumphant security—of sorrows, and likewise of pleasures. Continual toil moderated any excess of these contrary emotions; but what in my eyes annihilated all vexations, and doubled all enjoyments, was that the Emperor had appeared to be satisfied with my conduct, and conferred on me the title of Count, though my rank among his Councillors gave me no right as yet to this dignity. My zeal in his service could not increase; I do not know whether anything could have added to my admiration and devotion.

I gave all my time to the administration of the grand-duchy. I worked at it with my whole heart, first in fulfilment of my duty towards the Emperor, next from personal liking; and likewise because, as a whole, the inhabitants of the grand-duchy, so long as one overlooked their not being French, were some of the best people in

the world. Thus affairs advanced in all matters of detail of simple execution; but when I was obliged to ask a decision from Paris, it was impossible to get an answer from the Duke of Bassano, the only man in the world who could fulfil the duties of his office, except where the Grand-duchy of Berg was concerned. He was aware of it himself, and though the post of Secretary of State to the grand-duchy was worth 4,000*l.* a year to him, he endeavoured to get it transferred to his friend Semonville. I was in the secret, and advised to be silent. Except the Duke of Bassano, I could not have a more appropriate correspondent given me than Semonville.

I had long known him, even since the banishment of the Parliament to Troyes, and I had met him again, in 1790, with Mirabeau. Every acquaintance of Semonville's was to him a friend, and his friendship slept or revived in proportion as the acquaintance rose or diminished in favour. He should have been faithful to the Duke of Bassano, with whom he had shared misfortunes such as unite for ever two responsive hearts. They had been arrested in Italy together when the duke, then no more than Citizen Maret, was going on an embassy to Naples, and Semonville to Constantinople; both had been taken to the dungeons of Olmütz, where they had for three years suffered the pains of an Austrian captivity. Men do not forget one another when they have together escaped a great danger; and Semonville, besides, was not a man to allow himself to be forgotten by anyone who could be of use to him. Semonville is a peculiar man; for him intrigues are necessary to life. Nature has endowed every individual with the instinct of self-preservation, and thus Semonville has been found intriguing under every one of the successive governments of France for forty years, with no respect for time, place, or person: before the Revolution in the assemblies of the chambers

of Parliament, or at Versailles; then around the Constitutional Assembly, the Convention, the Committee of Public Safety, the Directorate, the Empire, and the Restoration; friend at once, or by turns, of D'Epremenil, of Lamoignon, of Robert de Sainte-Vincent, of Talon, of Mirabeau, of Danton, of Sièyes, of Chaumette, of Dambray, of the Duke of Bassano, of General Foy, and of the Duke of Rivière. His instinct informed him of the instability of the governments that have been tried upon France for nearly fifty years; under any existing government he was always one half for the present, and one half in the future one. He took good care to have a finger in every cabal; and whenever he did but approach one, he took care to proclaim, "Here I am." Though he is short-sighted, he looked at once to right, to left, and before him, and one would have thought that he had eyes behind. Such a wearisome, thorny part required a crafty mind, prudent and dexterous in calculation, and such was the character of our friend Semonville. In the first place, he employed such means as are in the power of ordinary persons with extreme dexterity; and, besides, he discovered, picked up, and moulded to his purpose things that would escape any other glance than his own. In everything, and for everything, he thought first of himself, as was natural, and never could be accused of, in the slightest degree, losing sight of this object. Talleyrand, the great master of epigrams off our age, hit of his character perfectly when he said, in reply to some who told him that Semonville was ill, "What, Semonville has a fever! how will he make use of it?" His egotism was collective; it extended to all the Semonvilles—children, grandchildren, male and female cousins. The family he had to provide for was large, and to it Semonville added as cousins, or persons who ought to be such, whoever could be of any service to him from far or near. This

had gained him a reputation for willingness to assist and oblige, which was established by many small services, and even some of more importance scattered in various quarters, as if from inclination, but really by calculation, among the different ranges of society. And thus no one looked on Semonville with ill-will; he was a tree bearing its natural fruits.

Under the Empire, he had long aspired to be Minister of Foreign Affairs. He seemed adapted for it by his ability, and by some diplomatic missions in which he had been successful. Intimacy with the Secretary of State seemed as if it would smooth his way. But for ten whole years all efforts had been useless. The eagle eye had thoroughly searched him out. The Duke de Bassano, who had come at last to despair of getting Semonville made Foreign Secretary, had tried to put him off with the easy and well-paid post of Secretary of State for the grand-duchy. Matters had been long previously arranged and prepared with the greatest care. The Duke of Bassano, though slow to hope, thought himself secure. On a certain Wednesday, he summoned Semonville to St. Cloud, on the day when the decree, already prepared, was to be presented for signature, and advised his friend to bring his senator's robes with him, so as to be in readiness to take the oaths. Semonville went—the dinner was a gay one—and drank the health of the new Secretary of State. The Duke of Bassano went up to the castle. Semonville put on his robes. He waited and waited for the messenger to summon him, but, instead of him, behold the Minister was seen coming back with the intelligence that the Emperor had erased the name of Semonville from the decree, and put in—whom?—Rœderer, the Duke's enemy, Semonville's enemy, the enemy of the whole world.

I resolved to get out of the game. I did not write to

Rœderer to congratulate him; he was surprised, and sent me some most obliging messages through a common acquaintance; I replied harshly, and behaved like an invader who has burnt his ships. I employed the Minister of Police to ask the Emperor for the post of Director of the Press; the Emperor answered that I was mad, and would not listen to me. He gave the post to Pommereuil, one of the most witty men, and certainly the most cynical I have met in this lower world. The electoral college of the Aube re-assembled to elect a candidate for the Senate. I stood for it, and was elected. I sent my wife to Paris to beg permission for me to enter the Senate; the Emperor laughed in her face, and replied that in perhaps twenty years I might be thought of. I wrote to the Duke of Bassano to entreat for my recall to the Council of State. He begged me to wait a little, for some other opening for my employment.

I wrote to Regnauld, who replied that, by thus knocking at all doors, I was implying a censure on the Emperor's late choice, and that was very imprudent. I could not bear to stay at Düsseldorf; so I went to the watering-place of Aix-la-Chapelle. These waters ought to be considered an active remedy; but, like all the mineral springs of Germany, they were less frequented by the really sick than by the idle rich, who could afford to pay pretty dear for the pleasures of the season. There was a tolerable theatre, an assembly-room where there was play, and pretty high play, and good company that came from Paris, or gathered from the neighbourhood. This year the town of Aix might call itself privileged, for included among the guests whom it had the honour of receiving were the Emperor's mother, the Princess Pauline, and King Louis. Each of these powers had arrived with the locomotive court

that followed their steps, and these little courts contained agreeable women and men of education. Among the numerous ladies who had come from Paris two were especially remarkable for wit, grace, or beauty, Mesdames Regnauld de Saint Jean d'Angély and Hainquerlot.

In the Imperial Court I had an advantage over most of my colleagues; I had not known any of the Emperor's family before he was himself the first personage in the state. I had begun with forms of respect to his relations; and when in the sequel such forms were forced on all the world, they were no trouble to me. The members of the family soon perceived this shade of difference, and were never embarrassed with new acquaintances; it was with such that they enjoyed themselves most. I saw it even in the Princess Borghèse herself, though she was so much the spoilt child of nature as to be able to disdain the additions made by rank to her powers of captivating.

I made my appearance at the little court of Madame Mère. The Princess Pauline made it so agreeable that even the King of Holland could not render it gloomy. The Emperor's mother was from fifty to fifty-five years old; as beautiful as a woman of her age could be; and if Raffaelle had had access to her when he painted his beautiful pictures of the Holy Family, he would have had no further to seek for that figure of Saint Anne, who graces so well what time has not been able to remove from features originally of great beauty, that the reverence due to age is always mingled with some degree of love. She had wit, and such energetic good sense as not to allow a loophole for her position to dazzle her; her education was neither better nor worse than that of the women of her time and country; she had retained its very marked

accent, and some vulgar phrases that she took no pains to alter, though she would have done as well to suppress them. Her *rôle* was all goodness, display, and dignity. The Emperor, who had a sort of intuition for the proprieties of an exalted station, wished his mother to undertake this part to the fullest extent, and amply furnished her with the means; but he had continually to contend against a fixed propensity which could never be eradicated, namely, a passion for economy. At the first visit I had the honour of paying her, Madame pressed me to give her the particulars of the expenses of an arrival and sojourn at the waters. I knew nothing about it; to me it was, as for most people, my servants' business. I answered all wrong, always making the prices so small so as to give her an excellent opinion of my management. Unfortunately she took my fine statements for the current prices, and the very next day began a campaign against her attendants and tradesmen, insisting that she was cruelly pillaged by both, and adducing me as an exception to the fate she lamented, mentioning each article and my price for it, so that it was impossible to get it out of her head. However, General Beurnonville, when once witnessing one of the numerous scenes I had unwittingly occasioned, assured Madame that I knew very little about housekeeping, and it was a matter on which my authority was very slight. She persisted, and desired me to come again. I avoided the second visit as much as I could, till an invitation to dinner drove me to the wall; and I was obliged to take up the conversation where I had left it. I was ill prepared. Whether on purpose, or merely in mischief, Madame set me at once upon the expenses of Aix-la-Chapelle, loudly vaunted my ability, and begged me to procure her the articles mentioned, at the same

price as I paid for them myself. At first I did not take the matter seriously, but she insisted, and gave me reason to suppose that she meant to extract a profitable sort of revenge from my effrontery. The Princess Pauline was present. She allowed my embarrassment to last some time, and then so shuffled the cards as to put out her mother's calculations, and get me out of the wasps' nest into which I had run by my unlucky assertions.

The King of Holland had brought to Aix-la-Chapelle his bad health, his nervousness and all its consequences. He had never chosen to understand what a king sent to Holland by the Emperor was, or rather might be. A man conscientious, even to scrupulousness, he had in all honesty taken up the defence of the country for itself against the Emperor. Thence arose incessant collisions and perpetual disputes, the solution of which was always the same—the *sic volo* coming from the Tuileries. While this poor King saw all Holland's means of prosperity slipping one by one from his hands, he was obliged to encounter an immense debt, for whose acquittal the only possibility was the utilisation of these means, besides the obligation of furnishing such a contingent to the French army as excessively raised his military expenses. He had brought with him perfectly prepared tables of his actual and possible resources, if the Emperor would allow him a little liberty, and favour a loan that he proposed to open in France. The manner of this loan was skilfully planned by the able Dutch; but it took for granted that the Emperor's necessities would not increase, and could never retard the payment of arrears and of the gradual liquidation of the loan. The King gave me the tables and the project, and asked me to furnish him with my written opinion. I sent him the report he had asked for. He was pleased with it, and

asked me to enter his service as Finance Minister. In any other case I should have declined the honour, but I thought myself excluded from the grand-duchy by M. Rœderer's appointment. I was not even sure that the Emperor would allow my ill-humour a retreat into the Council of State. I therefore accepted, and have no reason to doubt that the King proposed it to the Emperor, for he told me so. I left Aix-la-Chapelle before the answer came. It must have been unfavourable, for the King, with whom I continued to correspond, never mentioned it again. The only time I was in close communication with the King of Holland was during my stay at Aix-la-Chapelle, and that was enough to make me hold that prince in most honourable remembrance. He resisted his brother's will as long as he could, and once, when forced to endure it, he plainly told the Emperor that he should be devoted, body and soul, to the interests of Holland. His honest conscience held him high above the calculations of politics; he would not even conceive that he had been sent to Holland, above all, to assist in the war that the Emperor was carrying on against England—a concurrence that might possibly promise some distant compensation to Holland, but was sure, at present, to be ruinous. He regarded as barbarous the coolness with which the Emperor pursued his aim, without paying the slightest attention to his remonstrances, prayers, or lamentations. He was grieved to such a degree as to take no part in the pleasures of the watering-place. His conversation was sure to gravitate to his unfortunate position. I was doubtful whether he could retain it much longer; his health, already frail, was giving way under it; but it was to be expected that he would resist as long as he had the power, and that the Emperor must at last perceive that even a brother, not sufficiently one with him

to exact all he insisted on exacting from Holland, and that in such an affair he could depend on no one but himself. The presence of the Princess Borghese made a diversion in the melancholy introduced by the King of Holland into the society of Madame Mère. This Princess was the type of French beauty, that is to say, beauty tempered by grace and animated by gaiety. I should wish her statue to be entrusted to the genius of Canova, and that, when completed by his exquisite chisel, it might be reproduced in a thousand different places, and should, by general consent, assume among the moderns the same rank as a model as the Venus de' Medici among the ancients. The Princess was naturally clever, and had all the tact needful to prevent any detraction from her other valuable gifts. She rapidly floated through all the enjoyments belonging to her age, beauty, and fortunate independence. She came to Aix for two reasons: one quite respectable, and the other important; her health, and the duty of accompanying her mother; but the journey left despair in more than one place, and hope in several others. She had been followed to Aix, and did not know whether to choose to perceive it; and there she found more than one adorer, whose incense was lost in smoke. She treated this matter with charming levity; she might be called Atalanta skimming over the flowers without leaving any trace of her footsteps. At sight of her I said to myself, not without keen regret, "Happy the mortals who still sojourn in that fair stage of life when such vows and such altars are permissible!"

I spent my time at Aix-la-Chapelle very tranquilly, without troubling myself what became of the grand-duchy. I had, at leisure, for some days, bitterly regretted my separation from a country that I loved, and where I had found occupation so congenial to my tastes

and studies that I should have devised it for myself, even if it had not fallen to my lot; but, after this time of regret, I had made my decision, and the grand-duchy was to me only a country of which I had some pleasant recollections. Yet I received letters daily from my heads of departments, vying with one another in pressing my return. I was not yet shaken; but M. Regnault wrote to me, somewhat at the instigation of M. Rœderer, that he could not understand my conduct; that my sojourn at Aix-la-Chapelle without having asked permission or notice, was a dereliction of duty; that he advised me to return speedily to Düsseldorf, and resume business, till I should receive the Emperor's permission to resign. I still nourished the hope of passing into the service of the King of Holland, and reflected that, if I aimed at that, I must not get into disgrace with the Emperor. This consideration determined me to go back. I found things at Düsseldorf as I had left them, in very good condition. My absence had caused neither difficulty nor even anxiety, and I had a suspicion that I was not so necessary as I had flattered myself. This reflexion reduced my ill-humour a good deal; the exhortations of my fellow-workers did the rest, and I resumed the reins of government.

This period was that of the divorce and second marriage of the Emperor. The divorce had affected me much. I had known Madame de Beauharnais before her marvellous elevation; and she herself had not dropped my acquaintance when she was at the pinnacle of her honours. In such different positions, I had found her always the same, affable, sincere, kindly, graceful in the exercise of these amiable qualities, and of an elegance peculiar to herself. Everyone fell under a charm in her presence. She was listened to with a kind of rapture, because grace was displayed in her gestures as well as

her words. Old intimacies between her and my wife had brought us closer to her court, and it was not her fault that Madame Beugnot did not hold a situation there. So we suffered privately when the Empress Josephine herself lost by her retirement the means of patronage. More than that, from the affection I bore her I had let myself fall into the crowd of fortune-tellers. With them, I repeated, and in some degree believed, that Josephine was the Emperor's genius of good-fortune, and thus that of France, and that if ever she was separated from her husband she would carry fortune with her. The Emperor had so accustomed us to such wonders that the teachings of common sense did not satisfy us. We tried to forestall the future of so wonderful a present; and laying aside the ordinary calculations of human foresight, everyone in his degree allowed himself to be carried along by divinations, prophecies, and a renewal of our fathers' follies about the cabala. Women were the first to give themselves up to the dominion of these enchantments. The Empress, above all, yielded to them, and they became the habitual rule of her hopes and fears. It was said that she had good reasons; since in the flower of her youth, when she was as yet no more than the most graceful of Creoles, the high fortune to which she was destined by Heaven had been predicted in the most precise terms; and the man himself, the man of men, was not above believing in a destiny that drew him on. Such indeed had been the belief of the greatest personages of antiquity, and those especially who at the fall of the Roman Republic assisted in the dismemberment of that colossus.

The marriage that followed the divorce had produced an astonishing effect in Germany. The prodigies of the earlier campaigns against Austria and Prussia remained incontestable. The names of Austerlitz and Jena still

echoed; but it was not at all the same about the last campaign against Austria. The victory of Essling was matter of dispute, and with some reason; and that of Wagram had cost us dear. While though the honours of the treaty of peace had remained with us, since Austria had yielded to us Venice and the isles, these important cessions of territory were explained by the overhaste of the Emperor of Austria, who had been little inclined for war at first, and then had insisted on peace too soon and at any price. Far-sighted men, experienced in the art of war, had remarked some exhaustion in the French army; and it seemed as though the Emperor was of the same opinion, since he at this time required an immense development of artillery to accomplish what he had previously securely depended on obtaining merely through the force and discipline of his soldiers. It was openly said in Germany, "It is all very well for this time; but Napoleon will return no more."

Wagram must have made a deep impression on him. The Supreme Council were deliberating on the selection of a princess whose hand should be asked for the Emperor. Votes, as it seems, were divided among three princesses, among whom was the Archduchess Marie Louise. The Count de Cessac, who was present at the Council, opposed the choice of an archduchess as much as he could. He quoted a sad and yet recent example of an archduchess sharing the throne of France, and ended by saying that policy did not counsel this alliance, as Austria was no longer a power. "Austria no longer a power!" sharply replied the Emperor. "It is plain, Monsieur, that you were not at Wagram."

Thus the last peace had made but a very slight addition to the Emperor's moral power over Germany. Societies, secret but ardent to the pitch of infuriation, were stirring up hatred and fomenting resentment against us,

and preparing for the day of triumph for the *friends of virtue*, namely, for that on which the French should be swept from the face of Germany, or at least thrown back across the Rhine. The Universities were so many furnaces where this formidable mine was being prepared. Men of spirit and courage such as Baron Stein, and Count Walmoden, &c., were loudly mentioned as chiefs of the league, and took no trouble to deny it. The Emperor's ministers beyond the Rhine did not cease to warn him. I had myself furnished two reports, in which I had been able to relate better than most the origin, progress, and aim of these societies; for the details had been given me by the historian, Johann von Müller, who had been at first all on fire for the association, but who betrayed it the moment the Emperor took his fortune in hand. The answers we received from Paris, and the measures we were directed to take, were trifling, and could not be otherwise. The Emperor's Cabinet could only exercise compulsion on the sovereigns; and even allowing to them (what certainly did not exist) an equal desire for the destruction of the secret societies, they were destitute of the means; for these societies had been formed independently of their respective governments, and indeed one of their objects was to supply the weakness of those governments, and to repair the disasters caused by that weakness. What conclusion, then, can be deduced from this curious result of our great victories in Germany? That we had reached a point of civilization when it was easier to conquer a territory than to subdue the inhabitants. No doubt the ancient conquerors succeeded better; but at what a price! By depriving the conquered people of their institutions, their temples and their gods, and absolutely reducing them to a state of slavery. But the conquered Prussian provinces remained no less Prussian; and even became more so after the

conqueror had presented them with the monopoly of salt and tobacco licences, and a code of laws. It is useless to quote the example of the Romans. They, it is true, religiously preserved such institutions of conquered nations as might secure their tranquillity, that is to say, perpetuate their weakness, and failed not to put down the others. Besides, it is very doubtful if they could have managed their conquests in Asia and Africa so easily, or retained them so long, if the people of these countries had equalled the Romans in civilization. Secret societies would have been formed there likewise, and vengeance would not have delayed so long, nor have come from such a distance.

The marriage of the Emperor with an archduchess, if it did not extinguish this furnace, certainly moderated its heat. Such an event acting powerfully on public opinion, modified it better than any partial measures. A great change was immediately perceptible in the disposition of the grand-duchy. The families who had sons in the Austrian service invited them to Düsseldorf, to spend their leave there, as in a friendly country. These well-educated and distinguished young men, among whom were some chamberlains of the Emperor, fraternised in the most cordial manner with the French and German officers of our little army. If they still talked of war, it was with the hope of in future fighting side by side, and it was most pleasant to hear these brilliant young soldiers at last doing one another justice; the French allowing the superiority of the German arms on the day of Essling, and the Germans wondering at the marvellous manner in which we had taken our revenge on the field of Wagram. The Minister of the Interior assured me, on his own behalf and that of the other old partisans of the House of Austria, that peace with France was, from henceforward, not

only on their lips, but in their hearts; and that from being a necessity, it had become a sentiment. I saw this every day, as I observed the increase of those relations of confidence and of future connection that are only maintained with a government of unquestioned stability. The entertainments I gave in honour of this grand wedding were different from any I had hitherto given. I believed that this was the real celebration of the reconciliation of the two first nations of the continent, and, while trying to make them as splendid as the place permitted, I endeavoured to make them exhibit the character that I attributed to the occasion. I was easily understood. There was real joy in all hearts, such as a similar occurrence had never before produced. The Minister of the Interior and the principal functionaries in turn celebrated the event of the day. It was received with acclamations throughout the grand-duchy, always excepting the Prussian provinces, who could not forgive Austria any more than France, and saw with extreme sorrow an alliance from which they had nothing to hope for the future, but much to fear.

The administration of the grand-duchy continued peaceable. We had introduced French methods one after the other, and they were as well understood and better observed than in the country of their origin. Our codes had been made public there. The adoption of the civil code had necessitated the alteration of serfage and *colonat* into free holdings. There had been a veritable emulation between M. Rœderer and myself, who should show most respect for the rights of property, and we were apparently successful, for there was no appeal anywhere. The only chapter of French legislation that we passed by was the law of mortgage; that we were agreed in considering defective in many of its

principles, and especially inapplicable to Germany. The Emperor had given permission for us to offer a different project, better suited to the locality. We took the advice of the most learned lawyers in France and Germany, and we offered a work to the Emperor on which he had no time to give his opinion.

We had reduced the budgets and financial accounts to such simple and clear methods that they could be understood at a glance; and nowhere, perhaps, had control of the expenses been better and more firmly established. We were desirous of making a model administration, and, if permitted, of publishing the history of it. I was already at work on the statistics of the grand-duchy; M. Rœderer had taken the task of developing the theory, and the third portion would have been completed by tables showing the best means of putting it in operation. We had not time to leave such a memorial behind us, but some special subjects had furnished matter for reports that might still be advantageously consulted. I would point out, among others, a work on the origin of *colonats* in the portions of Germany near the Rhine; on the system of mortgages; on the coinage; and even on the lottery. There may be some surprise that two partisans, more or less warm, of the doctrine of economy should have taken any notice of the lottery, but to order its disappearance. Such had been my very decided opinion at first. M. Rœderer had made me change my mind by sufficiently weighty considerations. The German taste for the lottery had taken the place of their fathers' passion for games of chance. Thus every province had its lottery, and they were not contented with prizes of money alone; but also of pictures, curious bits of furniture, town or country houses, and even considerable estates. If an attempt were made to put down the lottery

in a single State of Germany, nothing would be gained, for people would only send the money they intended for the state-lottery into some country where it was not forbidden. And here, as the distance was never great, the transfer of money could not be regarded as an impediment. What, then, was the best, or least bad thing to be done in such a situation? To invent a lottery that should offer chances enough, and sufficiently favourable, to satisfy the cupidity of the players, and yet not make them pay too dear for their chance. For instance, care should be taken to avoid the system of the royal lottery of France, in which the prizes depended on some combinations that were very unlikely to occur, and the whole of the chances for the best were irrevocably gone in one drawing, leaving nothing but despair for the losers. Nothing similar was found in the system that had been in use in the grand-duchy. The payment of the prizes and the expense of the administration were deducted, as must of course be understood, from the total of the stakes, but did not exhaust it as in France. The stake, only slightly reduced, appeared again in a second and third drawing; so that, on condition of a small sacrifice of capital, a person had the chance of several drawings, and, all things considered, such a lottery, when entered on with moderation, might be a speculation which a wise man might embark in, like other people. We had not time to judge of the success of this establishment; but it had already gained so much confidence that considerable stakes were sent in to us from all parts of Germany.

An opportunity was afforded me to put the transcendental philosophy of M. Rœderer to the proof. As to religion, he was thoroughly a man of the eighteenth century, and would have been one of the leaders in the *salons* of Holbach, if he had made his appearance in

the capital a few years earlier. Joint owner of the *Journal de Paris* together with the Duke of Bassano, he had edited it during the imprisonment of the latter, and he fenced with sharp weapons against priests and religion during the religious reaction which prevailed throughout France just after the Reign of Terror. His anger had carried him beyond the bounds of good taste, and he received his punishment for it, for he never came within them again! I was aware of M. Rœderer's opinions, and I was delighted at having to report a miracle to him, submissively asking him to give the Ministers of the grand-duchy an outline of the line of conduct they ought to adopt, in a perfectly exceptional case. This is the fact:—

The Minister of the Interior one day communicated a letter to me that he had just received from the Prefect of Münster with an account of a miracle. There was a girl of twenty-three years old, living at Dalmen, who had been brought up in a Carmelite convent, and who had returned to her family after going through a noviciate, because her lamentable state of health had prevented her from taking the vows. The girl had been brought up in extravagant mysticism. She hardly took any food or sleep, and passed all the leisure time allowed her by the rule at the foot of the cross, where she had no doubt a thousand times prayed for the favour never yet granted to any one but Saint Francis of Assisi. Apparently she had been found worthy of acceptance. When she returned home she could not stand, and lay stretched on a bed, where she presented the most extraordinary spectacle. Round her forehead was a circle exactly representing a crown of thorns; on her hands and feet the mark of the nails, and on her left side that of the print of the spear. Blood flowed from these stigmata, and especially from that on the forehead. The

poor girl was in a state of suffering, for the feeble sounds that she could produce resembled groans. Small quantities of broth, given at intervals, was her sole nourishment. She gave no sign of life but by her endeavours to make the sign of the cross; but she could not succeed, as her arm fell back as soon as lifted. She kept her eyes almost constantly shut, and when she opened them it was plain that she was blind.

The Prefect of Münster had been informed of these facts by the priest of Dalmen, and in order to divest himself of any responsibility of belief, he had taken care to forward the priest's original letter. I was not much more inclined to believe than the Prefect. I replied to the Minister that it was always suspicious when a village priest was the witness of a miracle, and that there must be some imposition at the bottom of it, or some good Westphalian credulity. Count Nesselrode answered, "I should think the same, if I did not know the priest of Dalmen. He was an old comrade of mine; we were at the University together; he is a sensible man, well educated, and one of those Catholics who believe that there were miracles at the time when they were necessary, but do not believe that they continue since they are no longer needed. Read his letter again, and you will see it is that of a man who is not so easily imposed on." I did read it again, and was shaken. We agreed that the matter should be investigated. The Minister ordered a report on the physical condition of the girl to be made by two physicians, one of whom should be selected from the reformed religion, and required a circumstantial relation of the facts, prepared, if possible, jointly, by the priest of Dalmen and the nearest Protestant pastor. Precautions were taken to prevent a great resort to the cottage, and to restrain the saint from performing miracles in her turn.

We were at that point when I wrote to M. Rœderer about this prodigy. I related it with peculiar satisfaction, and weighing the reasons for doubt or belief, I inclined a little to the latter. I thought I should catch my old tough unbeliever so. He replied to me from the pinnacle of his philosophy with a laconic disdain, and told me that if any persons, except Catholics, had been called as witnesses of this miracle, as common sense would have directed, the story would never have reached me. I expected that answer.

Meanwhile, the physicians' report had arrived, as well as the account of the ecclesiastics. The first confirmed the physiological details that I have just related. The second gave some particulars respecting the young person's family, and her habits from childhood. There was nothing about herself or her surroundings that could give the least suspicion of imposition. The doctors closed their report with this observation, that it was impossible that it could be anything but an accidental effect of natural causes, but one so rare that not a step had been made to the discovery of the cause. The ecclesiastics showed no less prudence. They could not deny to Him who had given laws to nature the right of varying them in the interests of the human species, but they expatiated on the rarity of those deviations, and required, for the establishment of a miracle, evidence of a higher degree than that of the example before their eyes. They concluded by a proposal that the girl should be carried to a hospital at Münster, to put a stop to the disturbance which her presence occasioned in the village where she was. I thought this advice very prudent, even philosophic. The Minister of the Interior and I both felt our curiosity increased by reading these papers, and we took the determination of proceeding to Dalmen. M. de Nesselrode appointed the coadjutor Bishop of

Münster, M. Drost, to meet us there, a man of rare piety and good sense, eminently calculated to ensure the success of precautionary measures. We all three came to Dalmen. For my part, I saw a young girl at the point of death, lying on a bed, and really marked with the prints we had been told of. Blood flowed in a small quantity, but almost continually, from the kind of wounds she had on her hands and feet, and the circle around her forehead. This circle, by its texture and the little pricks that marked the outlines, nearly resembled a crown of thorns. Modesty prevented our pushing our researches further, but those present unanimously declared the presence of a wound on the left side, and this was likewise confirmed by the medical report. The unhappy creature could neither speak nor move. She only just slightly unclosed her eyes at long intervals. It was plain that her slight bodily powers were exhausted by the miracle of which she had been the subject. The civil magistrates, at whose head I was, shared the doubts of the physicians, that is to say, their ignorance. Bishop de Drost and two other ecclesiastics held themselves aloof, and reserved an opinion which they did not reveal. The bishop was one of those who easily explain any natural event the cause of which is unknown to them by the special intervention of the Deity. But, like a prudent man, he avoided any explanation, calmed people's minds, and had the girl carried to a hospital at Münster, where she died of inanition three months after.

I had replied to M. Rœderer, taking credit to myself for having agreed with him on the necessity of calling in others than Catholics to observe the phenomenon that I had told him of. I informed him of the measures taken for this purpose by the Minister of the Interior, and I told him that we must wait to see their success before giving any judgment on this strange business. He re-

plied with praise of the prudent measures that I had adopted, and added that he particularly dreaded the vexatious comments of the Protestants on the Dalmen miracle. I made the journey to Dalmen. I let some time elapse, and then I forwarded the physicians' report to M. Rœderer, containing this vexatious Protestant comment, with the memorial of the ecclesiastics, signed by an austere Protestant minister. I also told him what I had seen, and that there was nothing more left of me but a Saint Thomas convinced by evidence. I proposed that he should forward these papers to the Institute, as they might wish to examine such an unusual case, and endeavour to ascertain whether it did not proceed from the powerful influence of mind over matter, and was not in some way connected with galvanism, magnetism, or some of those agencies that have recently displayed themselves in the domain of science, and produce a variety of marvels which are not yet analysed. I quoted facts to him that had been mentioned in the reports of the Academy, and were somewhat analogous with the one in question. The journey to Dalmen heated my brains a little. I gave myself up to researches on phenomena that bore any relation to what I was interested in. I did not even neglect what is told of Saint Francis of Assisi and his stigmata. In the legends I only found stories most absurd in every point; but I contended in vain against magisterial incredulity personified in M. Rœderer. In him I met the thorough editor of "The Journal of Paris." He would not publish anything, and he considered the whole affair as utter folly, a view that was necessarily infinitely flattering to his colleagues the Ministers of the grand-duchy.

CHAPTER XII.

Arrival of the Emperor at Düsseldorf—Presentation of the Authorities—Review of the Troops—Council of Administration—A Stormy Sitting—Displeasure of the Emperor—Le Haras Sauvage—Unexpected Invitation to Dinner—Imperial Familiarity—Semi-official Conversation with the Emperor Napoleon I.—The Empress—Dinner at the Residence—Reception of the Emperor in Public—Right and Left Banks of the Rhine.

In this year, 1811, the Emperor caused his coming to Düsseldorf to be announced. It seemed at that time as if heaven had filled up th measure of his happiness. He had just had a son whose destiny the poets might well forecast after pleasure. The child who inspired the swan of Mantua with the idyl, or rather splendid prophecy, to the *Sa Musæ*, was only a little adventurer in comparison with him who united in his person the honours of ancient family with all the dazzling splendour of a new and boundless glory unparalleled in the past. The Emperor was wise in showing to his provinces of German origin, the Archduchess, mother of the King of Rome. He began his journey with Belgium, went on through Holland, and thus reached the grand-duchy. His sojourn in the Belgian provinces was a success, that is, if he took to himself the very enthusiastic homage of which the Empress was the object; and which, perhaps, was in great measure addressed to the descendant of Maria Theresa. He had not been equally well pleased in Holland. His mode of government did not in the least agree with the require-

ments of the Dutch, who live by navigation, by their colonies, by commerce and credit. He was assailed by demands he could not listen to, and by complaints that it was not in his power to redress. The Dutch were always persecuting him with their calculations in which the ruin of the country was the necessary result of the continuance of the continental system. They were not the sort of people to find compensation in the fine speeches, of which the Emperor was not sparing, until on his side he grew tired of making them, and left Holland more quickly than had been indicated in the programme of his journey. I knew that he blamed the prince arch-treasurer, to whom he had confided the conversion of the Dutch, for having done so little towards it. The arch-treasurer without doubt had a mind of the highest order, but he found it easier to translate Homer and Tasso, and to handle the most arduous points of political economy with facility and elegance, than to console a Dutchman for the loss of ten florins.

I could easily see that the Emperor had been vexed when he came to Düsseldorf. Domestic events were not the cause, the daily reports of the King of Rome were excellent. The interior of France enjoyed perfect tranquillity, and it would have been the same on the rest of the Continent but for the continuance of English intrigue. Probably he was convinced that these intrigues had their focus in Holland, and that this country belonged to England in heart, and more than ever since it had been united to France and placed under the double dominion of his army and his laws.

The Emperor arrived at Düsseldorf about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. During the rest of the morning he received the constituted authorities. The speeches addressed to him pleased him doubly, first because they

were short, and secondly because they were written and even passably delivered in French. It seemed as if he had not been spoilt in these two particulars in Holland, and on the literary side of the question the advantage lay decidedly with the grand-duchy. One circumstance in the presentation of the authorities, in which I had taken no share, in no way interfering with it, surprised the Emperor's court, and was judged of in various ways. The chiefs of the different religions established in the grand-duchy presented themselves before His Majesty together, all in a row. The chief of the synagogue was in the centre; on his right, in the absence of the bishop, was the dean of the Catholic chapter, and at his left the oldest Protestant minister. The rabbi had a fine old man's head, in beautiful accordance with his costume, and the two Christian priests were not much inferior in appearance. The courtiers would have been glad to laugh, but the Emperor was serious. The rabbi pronounced the following discourse in a grave tone:—

"Sire, the ministers of the religions who acknowledge the same God, preach the same morality, and equally endeavour, but by sometimes different means, to make men virtuous on earth, and worthy of a better life in heaven, have come together to lay their homage at the feet of him who, like a new Cyrus, has rebuilt our temples, renewed our altars, and restored the ancient respect for our solemnities. Sire, they declare that they instruct the people in love for your sacred person, in respect for your laws, and gratitude for your benefits; and they judge themselves worthy to set the example."

The Emperor answered:—"I receive your homage, and approve your feelings. All men are brothers before God. They ought to love and succour one another, whatever be the difference of their religions. You here set a good example. I would advise you always to keep

the peace, and have no disputes about anything but the means of making men obedient to the laws, attached to their princes, and faithful to the commands that God himself has given, and of which you are alike depositaries."

I here repeat the address and answer exactly as the public papers gave them at the time. I was not concerned in the harangue of the religious ministers, and allowed it to be given only in the hope that its novelty would make a break in the barrenness of these presentations. At first I was afraid as to its success. The scene had confounded the great exponents of etiquette, who were on the high road to become as ridiculous as the Dangeaus or Staintots of Louis XIV. I had plainly heard General Lauriston complaining bitterly that any one had dared to play such a pitiful farce before the Emperor, and especially the Empress, and saying that such people ought to be kicked out. But, after the Emperor's answer, his wrath was suddenly appeased, and he did not neglect to make me sure of it by saying, "Did you hear how the Emperor has set all right by his answer? If he was not angry, it was for fear of frightening the Empress."

"What! can the Emperor be angry or pleased at will? This is a new quality; but, in this case, what was there to make him angry? The priests presented themselves with dignity; their speech, I thought, was good; and the Emperor, who loses no time in flattery, praised it."

The same day, after dinner, the Emperor received the princes of the neighbourhood who had assembled to pay their court to him, and the persons of note in the grand-duchy. He had so cleverly addressed his budgets of questions, that before he went to bed he was better informed respecting the interests of the country than I was

myself. In the evening I attended to know how the next day would be employed. He appointed a review of the troops at eight o'clock in the morning, a Council of Administration at ten, and a sitting of the Council of State at two.

The review was successful. I observed that he showed some symptoms of kindness towards General Damas. I had left the infantry in their white coats with facings of full blue, cut straight, exactly like those of the German troops. I had added cloth trousers, and shoes that were fastened above the ankle, like half-boots. The Emperor called a soldier out of the ranks, turned him round and round, put his hand under the collar of his coat and under his waistcoat, then said, showing him to the Prince of Neuchâtel—

"Berthier, here is a well-dressed soldier. And mine?"

"All very fine," answered the prince. "Ask Beugnot what he costs."

That very moment the question was put, my good star brought the knowledge to my fingers' ends. The Emperor did not consider the price excessive. He wanted to know where I got the cloth, and how much I paid for it. I satisfied him about these last questions; but after that time the manufacturers of the grand-duchy were put in requisition for the Emperor's service, and so exclusively that I could not get a piece of cloth for the army of the grand-duchy.

I confidently awaited the Council of Administration, as I fancied that the Emperor would come very well disposed towards it. I was mistaken. The council was stormy, and I had to bear the brunt. It was composed of the Duke of Bassano, of the Prince of Neuchâtel, of MM. Dam, Bœderer, and Nesselrode, ministers of the grand duchy. First the Emperor attacked me on my

system of accounts, which he picked to pieces after his rough way, and made out to be ill arranged. I could only reply to him by reconstructing the business as I understood it myself, and as in my opinion everyone ought to understand it. The end of it was that after a great many cyphers and explanations neither of us was the forwarder; indeed, in such a discussion between two persons it is hardly possible not to get entangled. The Duke de Bassano endeavoured to relieve my embarrassment in the kindest manner possible. Three different times did he attempt to show that the results that my accounts presented were perfectly correct, even when analysed in the Emperor's way. The Emperor would not give up, and summoned the director of the accounts of the grand-duchy to the sitting. He replied, and worked out his answer exactly as I had done. "There is nothing to be done with all these people," said the Emperor, harshly: "it is a conspiracy of disorder."

And this good German director answered, "No, Sire, be quite easy; there is no disorder. Your Majesty has not had time to see that it is all right."

The Emperor, but little satisfied with the result of the council, attacked me about the public debt, for its daily increase by indirect means, without his being informed. I answered that the debt could only increase in one way, and that very direct, by the pensions His Majesty was pleased to grant. I had not proposed a single one that was not in conformity with the rules. I even waited as long as it was possible before proposing a new pension for the extinction of an old one of the same value, so as not to augment the amount; but the Emperor, of his own proper motion, had granted considerable pensions upon the grand-duchy, and it was not surprising that the total amount was influenced.

"All your pensions and your public debt should have been subjected to revision."

"I could not have done it without having received the orders of the Emperor, and perhaps I might have had the happiness of convincing His Majesty that the result of such a measure would have been very small as regards profit, and would only have made me lose credit."

"What do you mean by those words; and what is your credit, if you please? I did not send you here to do business. A merchant or banker wants credit: as for you, it is order that I want, and I do not find much here."

"Sire, I beg your majesty's pardon for having used an improper expression. I meant by credit the confidence I require to enable me to fulfil the mission with which I am honoured."

"Again, what is this sum of deposits that appears at chapter eight of the receipts, and increases in one year by more than twelve thousand pounds? It is a never-ending disorder."

"Sire, the smallest explanation will vouch for this receipt. The ancient rules of the grand-duchy required that the receipts from estates owned by minors when exceeding the sum of forty pounds should be lodged in the public treasury. Private persons are also allowed to place their capital there. When they wish to withdraw it they inform the Treasury, and it is restored with a longer or shorter delay, according to the importance of the capital withdrawn. These sums bear an interest of four per cent. for private persons. The Treasury gets one-fifth and a trifle more by placing the funds in France in State bonds."

At this moment the thunder broke. In vain I proved that the grand-duchy thus obtained profits which I carried exactly into my accounts; in vain I mentioned the honourable house in France that conducted the

business; and insisted, in order to show him that this institution had to be preserved or suppressed, that I had found it long since established, that its suppression would be the rupture of a bond of honourable confidence between the prince and his subjects, and that long use had rendered it necessary. The Emperor flew into a regular passion. He maintained that I allowed myself to keep loans always open in the grand-duchy, and I required credit apparently for that purpose. He wanted to see to the bottom of this fund. I begged the Emperor to order it to be verified that moment, and before I left the council. I spoke these last words in a tone of great emotion, and those present saw I could hardly restrain my tears. The Emperor called on the Minister of the Interior to be so good as to tell him what he knew of the fund. Count Nesselrode answered that he could add nothing to what the Finance Minister had just said; and he could only repeat that the suppression of this establishment would have had a bad effect on the duchy. M. Roederer timidly added that perhaps some difficulty might have been found in the employment of the receipts from the estates in wardship. The Emperor's anger resolved itself into an animated allocution on the dangers of credit, the ways of which are thus opened to the young Grand Duke, who on his accession would find a machine ready prepared to enable him to get hold of the fortune of his subjects. He will seize on it greedily; he will borrow all he can, and Heaven knows what use he will make of the money! Then came a digression on the foolish expenses that the German princes run into; and as an instance, an account of a day's sport given to him in the kingdom of Würtemberg, which was only a disgusting butchery, and had cost I do not know how many thousands of pounds. I was glad to see the Emperor go a little afield, in hopes that he

would slacken somewhat in his career; but there remained an article to be treated of, in any way very delicate, and on that point I expected new rigours,—it was the ordinances of payment.

It is well known that the expenses of the twelve months of the year were fixed once for all by the budget; but on the first of each month the Emperor issued orders for the payment to the different ministers of the sums considered necessary for the service of the month, and it was only in virtue of this order, and in exact accordance with the sums there stated, that the treasury cashed the orders of the ministers. This method had been applied to the grand-duchy. It may well be supposed that I never failed to forward on the 20th of each month the list of funds necessary for the various services during the ensuing month. Certainly most frequently I received an order of payment which was always in conformity, but sometimes, and especially during the last Austrian war, these orders had been delayed for two months. Yet we encountered expenses which admitted of no delay, and I had taken upon myself to draw provisional orders upon the Treasury without authorisation; and it was a remarkable thing that these orders, though subsequently authorised, did not escape the Emperor's observation in the examination he made of the condition of the treasury three years afterwards. He asked me the reason of breaking through such a strict rule as that forbidding a single coin leaving the treasury without an order for payment; and he added that I had compromised my responsibility, and that of the accountant, who deserved to be dismissed, or worse, as the reward of his complaisance. I explained that I had committed this transgression with full knowledge of what I was doing, and in reality pledging my responsibility; but under what circumstances? First I forwarded exactly my esti-

mate of expenses. I did more; I followed them up with two reminders, and sent information in a third letter, that if I did not receive the order for payment, I should find myself obliged to draw on the treasury for expenses that could not be deferred, such as the pay of the troops, the price of the equipments that had been made for them, and the expenses of the hospitals that were chargeable to the State. I quoted, among other pressing matters, the order I had received to forward an infantry regiment immediately to Spain, at a time when the orders were delayed. I could not send it off without money, and I inquired if I ought to have delayed the departure of the regiment till I received the orders for payment, and whether I should not have been as seriously compromised by the delay as by the abuse for which I was blamed. Besides, I had only employed this extreme method three times, while the Emperor was at the furthest extremity of Germany; and I had employed it with so much moderation that I had left in arrear the payments to the judges, ministers, ecclesiastics, and all the persons employed in the administration; in a word, I had only drawn from the treasury for the most urgent expenses, and within the limits of my requisitions, so that when the distribution orders did arrive, the provisional payments had been authorised without any kind of difficulty. A slight murmur and some signs of approbation made me believe that my answers had been considered satisfactory; and so perhaps they were by all except the Emperor.

"That is all very fine," replied His Majesty. "I know nothing that people cannot manage to justify by necessity, especially when they constitute themselves judges of that necessity. I take the instance you have quoted. Well! this second regiment would not have started for Spain; and, I ask you, should I have been able to blame

you for not having forced the doors of the treasury and committed a robbery in order to enable it to start? The object of payment orders for the grand-duchy, as for all France besides, is to keep the keys of both treasuries always in my pocket. When I sign a payment order I lend this key, and it may be legally used; but when I have not lent it, there is no other way of getting into the treasury but by breaking open the doors; and when doors are forced to obtain money, what is it called? It would be a fine thing to see the ministers of France and those of Italy flying upon the public treasures after the pattern of those of the grand-duchy, and every one making out credits for himself after his own fashion. It would be worse than the Tower of Babel!"

At this point the approbation of the spectators was markedly evinced. I was too much agitated to feel indignant that the superior men called to this council, no doubt to make matters clearer, should not have found anything but signs or monosyllables of applause to give to these strong expressions with which the Emperor was evidently sporting.

Some matters in the department of the Minister of the Interior were considered. The Emperor showed himself propitious then, and accepted without any difficulty the praises that M. Roederer gave to the administration of Count Nesselrode, who hitherto had done nothing without consulting me. The last thing considered was the wild breeding-stud; and, as if it was to be an unlucky council for me, I found myself in this matter again of a different opinion from the Emperor. The sitting had been prolonged, and the hour appointed for the council had struck. So the Emperor raised the siege, and left me quite convinced that it was the last time I should have the honour of working with

him. Such and so profound was my persuasion, that I did not accompany him to the Council of State, where he overwhelmed the good Germans with admiration, as they did not know how he had become acquainted with their interests, and wondered at the superior manner in which he handled them. M. Fuschius said to me when he came from the council, "Indeed, monsieur, I have read a great many things about the Emperor, and heard more, but I did not yet know him: he is more than a man."

"I think as you do," answered I: "he is a devil."

Five or six persons were present when this word slipped out; it was repeated, with some kindly intention, to the Emperor; but he was not offended, and, on the contrary, said gaily, "Indeed, he is right, for I kept him on hot coals all the morning."

I went home, told my wife my misfortune, and advised her to pack up, for I was disgraced, and certainly a message would come to demand the return of my portfolio. We were mournfully considering our fate, when a messenger from the Emperor was announced. I had both leaves of the door opened, and advanced nobly, like a man unmoved by disgrace. I found a servant who brought me a *vivâ voce* invitation to dinner with the Emperor for that very day. I explained to him that he had most likely made a mistake, and that the invitation must be for Count Rœderer, who was in the same house, and I sent him to that gentleman. The servant persisted, and told me that it was somewhat remarkable that he had received the order from the Emperor himself; that he had made no mistake; that he had heard my name quite plainly, and could not go to the Emperor for an explanation. The change was so quick that I was quite puzzled at it. I was taking counsel with my wife whether I should go to the Castle, when the Duke of

Bassano arrived, brought by his unwearied good-nature. He came to encourage me, and made no doubt of the reality of the invitation, and even of its flattering nature, since the dinner would be a family one. The Emperor had appointed the dinner for the ministers and some persons of importance for the next day. The Duke's visit somewhat calmed me; but the feelings by which I had at first been agitated gave place to some sort of resentment at the way I had been treated all the morning, and I went to the Emperor in a tolerably moody frame. I cannot tell how the man's feelings resumed their sway under the discontented minister. I think if His Majesty had continued to hold the same tone to me I should not have diminished in any way the profound respect which I owed him, but should have begged him to set me at liberty. I entered with a sad and distrustful face. The Emperor was in the room, walking with the Prince of Neuchâtel. I made two low bows, and kept apart. He came to me.

"Well, you great idiot, have you recovered your wits?"

I bowed lower, without having a word to answer. The Emperor instantly took hold of my ear, which was the most intoxicating mark of favour towards him who had the luck to receive it. All was forgotten, repaired, embellished, by this imperial gesture of familiarity. Conversation became general. I am sensitive almost to the point of weakness, and if anything is to be done with me, I must be dealt with at a calm moment. I had in a moment returned to affection and gratitude.

The Emperor blamed me for having been so obstinate about the system of accounts, where I was wrong. I owned it, and if he had chosen he might have made me own graver faults, and equally untrue. With regard to the other matters, the Emperor asked me why bridges

always have parapets. I was racking my brains for an answer, when he gave one himself.

"Do not seek so far; it is just simply to keep fools from jumping into the rivers. Out of ten thousand—why should I say ten thousand?—out of a hundred thousand persons who cross a bridge, perhaps there is not one who has a fancy to go and see what is at the bottom of the river; and yet parapets are built to all bridges, and with justice, for a few instances of persons throwing themselves over would be enough to make bridges the regular resort of suicides. Well, my orders for payment are my parapets. I reckon you as a tried man; I know less of Nesselrode, but he seems to me a German nobleman in the best sense of the word. In France my Ministers of Finance and of the Treasury are excellent. No matter, I must have parapets; for my confidence is more securely founded on severity of rule than on the characters of men. I employ many, and I am far from knowing them all. So I must trust. Now for me, and even for them, it is safest to put them in a position it is impossible to abuse. You will not refuse to avow that with your provisional warrants and the complaisance of your man of the treasury (I do not know his name), you might get fifty or a hundred thousand pounds out of this treasury and run off with it. You would not do it now; but after you will come some one else. Who will he be? You do not know, no more do I. Perhaps an honest man up to that point, but who will take advantage because I have left him the power of doing so."

I replied, "The Emperor perhaps has not forgotten that he has entrusted more considerable sums to me which I might have misused."

"I stop you, for you are falling back into the morning's mania once more. It is not your own self that is in

question: I am reasoning in a general way. In a word, can you answer to me for all the people I employ? You would be very bold."

"But I only infringed the rule at the last extremity, and was reduced to it by the delay of the orders for payment."

"That is your only argument; and, after all, the sky would not have fallen on the grand-duchy or anywhere else, if your payments had been a little delayed. Besides, the exception does not destroy the rule; on the contrary, it was the rule I was defending. When you were speaking this morning about the government of the communes, you quoted what had been your own practice in this matter before the Revolution. What were you doing before the Revolution?"

"Sire, I filled the post of provincial syndic attorney."

"Oh, indeed, then you must be older than Berthier?"

"That is very possible. I have not had any chance of knowing."

The Prince of Neuchâtel said, "I should not think so. In what year were you born?"

I named it, and we found that I was ten years younger than the Prince. The Emperor took his text from it to prove that a difference of ten years, more or less, between two persons who are past forty is immense. He observed that the men of his Council of State, and the great majority of those with whom he began his government, were of my age, and would all fail him at the same time. I answered that he had a rich nursery-ground in the class of Masters of Requests and Auditors. where he would easily find means to replace us. The Emperor replied, "I do not at all know that: you were all of you, by different names, children of the Revolution; you were tempered in its waters, and you rose from them with a vigour that will not be repeated." He

then spoke of the difficulties surrounding the choice of public functionaries by a new Government, and concluded with these words: "I have made the fortune of those who have worked with me to found the Empire, and I will make that of their children: it is a duty. After that, I will never employ any man who has not got his thousand a year in land. I am not rich enough to pay all the world; and those who are most interested in the maintenance of the State ought to serve gratuitously. When we have done with war—and Heaven grant it may be soon!—we must turn our hands to the task; for all our present work has been but provisional. But patience."

The Empress, the Duchess of Montebello, and the Duke of Bassano entered the room. The conversation lost the semi-official character it had so far possessed, and turned upon the country, its beauties and defects, on the Empress's abode and accommodation. "All that," said the Emperor, "is very bad, and it is Count Beugnot's fault; for he ought to know that I expect to find convenient dwellings in the places where I stay and am master." I stammered out some lame excuses. We went in to dinner. The Emperor was in a good humour then, and entertained the company a little at my expense. He criticised with nice tact the little negligences I had fallen into from being so much absorbed after their majesties' arrival at Düsseldorf. I saw that he had not thought the completion of his education beneath him, and that there was a great, very great difference between the Emperor of 1811 and the First Consul whom I had received at Rouen ten years before. Then I had to act as master of the ceremonies and suggester of good manners, and had a laborious post; and to-day I could hardly get into my head the forms of respect and deferential acts of observance making up the etiquette

in the midst of which the Emperor moved. After dinner I made up the Empress's card-table with the Duchess of Montebello and the Duke of Neuchâtel, and had the honour to be her partner at whist. The game was a very careless one, as often happens in such a case, each of the players hardly doing more than glancing at the cards, while giving his mind to what was passing around the table, to which the Emperor came every now and then to say something pleasant to the Empress, or address some joke to the Prince of Neuchâtel or me. My mind was not sufficiently at ease to observe, during or after dinner, in what sort of humour was the Empress, or to perceive any impress of her character in her features. The journey had been long; she seemed fatigued and weary. She only answered the Emperor in monosyllables, and everyone else with a monotonous gesture of the head. I cannot really give any cause for it, but am inclined to believe that Her Majesty was not exempt from the timid awe that her august spouse imposed on all who had the honour of approaching him.

When the game was over, I waited till the Emperor had concluded some audiences to ask his orders. He told me that the next day he would have his ministers to dine with him, the coadjutor of Münster, the prefect, the mayor of the town, and the princes who chanced to be at Düsseldorf; that he had accepted an entertainment at the theatre and a ball, and that this would consume part of the evening. He desired me to arrange with the Duke of Bassano to have a dinner of forty persons in my house at the same time, at which the latter and myself should preside, and to invite the principal functionaries of the grand-duchy, whom his arrival had brought to Düsseldorf. Things had to be done as magnificently as the locality permitted, so that the Germans might feel themselves the guests of the

Emperor, and I employed a portion of the night in preparing the ordinances of which the Emperor had reminded me. I was also afraid of the deliberation of M. Rœderer's proceedings. He was naturally hard to satisfy. Other people's work seldom was lucky enough to please him, and he was even hard upon his own. He would revise it again and again, and spend a great deal of time in seeking for perfection. This merit, praiseworthy in an author, becomes a defect in the despatch of business. However, when the Emperor was there, speed was needful, and this time M. Rœderer let me have my way.

He meant to depart the day after the morrow, and wished before going to sign the decrees that had been decided on in the council. He had already warned M. Rœderer, whom he suspected of not being expeditious; and it was well that I should come to an understanding with him. I returned home, possessed with fresh zeal. I spent the rest of the evening in giving audiences to persons who had come to Düsseldorf with requests to make to the Emperor, or simply out of a by no means unsuitable curiosity.

Next morning I attended the levée. The Emperor kept me; and when the company had gone, his first word was, "Well, my ordinances?" "Sire, they are ready, and M. Rœderer will bring them when he comes at two o'clock for his work."

"Very well. I have by me the two requests of the city of Mulheim that you refused, and you were not wrong; but what could not be allowed as a right may be granted as a favour, and I should like to grant a few on my way. You must take the bundle, and these matters may be passed with the others."

The Emperor went on thence to enter into details very interesting to me. He saw that I had done some

good in the country; he especially approved of my having put down mendicity, which is so odious on the other side of the Rhine; he kept on striving, hand to hand, with it in France, but it is a difficult sore to extirpate in a large state. The Emperor reproached me with my parsimony: I was badly housed, and ill equipped, and he would not have it so. He held to order in everything and everywhere, but he did not therefore object to pay proper expenses. I must see to the repair and furnishing of the hunting-lodge, which was very uncomfortable even as a resting-place on a journey. He supposed the town-house was not much better, since I did not live there. There was not a prefect who was not better lodged than I. Some attention must also be paid to the lodge at Benrath and the castle of Bensberg. All this must be done gradually, economically, and according to plans which should be submitted to him; or rather he would send some one from Paris, for there was no architect in the country. I was settled there for a long time. My name was always being mentioned to him; what did I want? To be one of his ministers in Paris. To judge by what he saw of me the other day, I should not be there long. I should die in torments before the month was over. He had already killed Portalis, Cretet, and even Treilhard, who, however, died very hard, but he could not get on any more than the others; the same would happen to me, if not worse. I was well off with these people, who were good people. I must stay here till the young prince came to take possession of his grand-duchy, and even stay on two or three years to teach him his business; after which I should be old, or rather we should all be old, and he would send me to the Senate to twaddle at my ease. There was my career; and he did not know a better. Was my malady the longing for dear Paris, like the rest?

He would not refuse me leave every year to go and spend some time there: it would even be as well for me to bring my budget there, and explain it in person. In thanking the Emperor for this last favour I found means to say that it was the more valuable to me because the Emperor only knew as much of my work and of my conduct as suited his Secretary of State for the grand duchy to report, and I could not feel sure of his goodwill.

"I allow," replied the Emperor, "that Rœderer is not a nice person to deal with; but I know his fault, and attend to it."

The dinner that was given at the Residence had a kind of magnificence about it. The Duke of Bassano did the honours with much grace, and with the kindness natural to him—captivating, like everything that comes from the heart. I had got together forty-six guests. At the beginning of dinner all preserved a grave silence; but by degrees the good wines of France relaxed the brows of the illustrious company, and we had not reached the dessert when they were all at the confusion of tongues. All the time there was not the slightest approach to disorder; only an intermingling of a little of the kindly warmth that cannot now be found anywhere but beyond the Rhine. I can well suppose that the Emperor's dinner did not offer a trace of anything similar: notwithstanding Hebe and her nectar, the repasts of Olympus are enough to kill with weariness. I had ordered at the theatre Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Either there lingers in Germany some tradition of the manner in which the master wished his setting to be sung, or else Mozart's music gains by passing through German throats; for certainly *Don Giovanni* is better felt and better sung in Germany than in France, and for that reason I had selected this piece to be played

before the Court. But the Emperor, who had perhaps not had the opportunity of making the same comparison as I had, was not tempted by the bill; he sent orders for the piece to begin, and did not make his appearance till towards the end. He said next day that if he had foreseen that it would be no worse he should have come sooner. From the theatre the Emperor went to the ball-room, and was kind enough to remain some time there. Wherever he went, he found universally expressed two deeply marked feelings of different sorts. In his presence there was a kind of shock like that experienced at sight of a miracle; towards the Empress, the most affectionate respect was felt. These feelings were not of a nature to produce the thunders of applause to which France had accustomed the Emperor. His reception would even have been cold by comparison, if the Frenchmen living at Düsseldorf, and those in the suite of the Emperor, had not encouraged the Germans to applaud, and given them the signal and example. The Duke de Bassano took advantage of the Emperor's presence at the ball to present our dinner-guests to him, and they were most kindly received. On the whole, the day went off well; and the Emperor, who would not allow that it had been at all tedious, appeared satisfied. He informed me that he had appointed his departure for the next day at six in the morning, and added that, as the wild breeding-stud would not take him far out of his road, he would stop there and examine the state of things for himself, so as to be better enabled to decide between his opinion and mine. Next day I was at the palace at half-past five, and three-quarters of an hour later in the forest of Duisbourg, where is the wild breeding-stud. The Emperor did really go thither in his carriage at the time appointed, and mounted his horse; but when he had advanced some distance into the forest, and saw that the stud was

dispersed over twenty-four thousand acres of wood, and that the horses were so scattered that it was very hard to collect them, he perceived that he could make no observation that would be of any use, and resumed his journey to Cologne.

M. Rœderer did not accompany the Emperor; he stayed a week longer with me, and displayed himself, in milder form, almost good-natured. I knew that he had watched with some envy the manner in which the Emperor treated me, especially in matters of display, and that, either by design or chance, his complaints had reached the Emperor, who had replied, "Rœderer is a fool if he does not see the reason of the difference. He follows me; Beugnot stays behind."

M. Rœderer, remarking on the reproaches that the Emperor had made me for having no proper house, or furniture, or establishment, took the trouble to explain to me what he would have done in my place to procure such enjoyments; and he displayed a delicacy of taste, a knowledge of comfort and refinement in all things, that no one would ever have expected to encounter in him. I perceived that he was no stranger to the fine arts: he placed on paper some ideas for the embellishment of the town of Düsseldorf, that have been useful. We parted, retaining on both sides the same feelings towards one another as when we met, and yet the friction of an intimacy lasting for a fortnight had slightly rubbed off the sharp points of the angles.

The Emperor, before he left Düsseldorf, had determined all matters in suspense, as he usually did, only leaving that of the wild breeding-stud undecided. I had constantly begged for its abolition, but the Emperor always delayed the sentence, as he was prejudiced in favour of the utility of such establishments, having seen

them in Poland and Northern Germany. He would not understand that wild breeding-studs are only well situated in such countries as have no strong impulse of civilization; but that they are intolerable where the woods are valuable, and arable land is precious. Thus they are found to disappear in Germany in proportion as the distance from the Rhine diminishes. The civilization of the Gauls, and of one part of Germany, advanced by the Roman conquest, and even by the efforts that the people had made to escape from it, had quickly extended as far as the Rhine; but it had great difficulty in gaining a footing on the right bank of the stream. It was on the very territory of the grand-duchy that Varus had lost his legions; and the forest of Duisbourg, where the wild breeding-stud was then situated, was probably the site of that ill-fated general's tribunal when overthrown for his first act of violence. His other acts are well known, as well as the fact that the eagles of three legions remained in the hands of the victors. Two eagles, back to back, compose the most glorious trophy of the Germans. This trophy was copied thousands and thousands of times by barbarous artists, and was distributed from one end of Germany to the other, so as to minister to the public intoxication. To this day we find them, and they are well placed; for the arms of the empire of Germany, the eagle with two heads and four feet, is nothing but the reproduction of the eagles captured from Varus — a clumsy reproduction, just as it was at first, but since consecrated to the holy Roman empire by the immutable principles of heraldry. Anyhow, such an origin is as good as another, and if heraldic science had possessed many such to preserve, it would not be the stateliest vanity of this lower world.

In spite of the defeat of Varus, or rather because of it, the right bank of the Rhine was guarded by the

Romans as a military post, and had lost its population, which had retreated into the interior. This explains how wealthy colonies, great cities, such as Strasbourg, Treves, Mayence, Cologne, form a rich belt on the left bank of the river, while nothing of the sort is present on the right bank; and thence arises also the different amount of cultivation between the opposite sides. The ground that composes the grand-duchy had long been covered by forest, and the traces of it may be seen to this day, the country having been only recently reclaimed. The urus, the horse, swine, and wild animals lived at pleasure in these immense forests. The inhabitants of several cantons united at stated times to hunt them; and thus we see that certain communes and some ancient families have preserved a right to share in the capture of horses. It seems that afterwards some skill was introduced into this chase; successive enclosures were contrived which brought the animals within reach of the hunters without danger or even fatigue; and at the present day the establishment called the breeding-stud in the grand-duchy consists of an enclosure of this kind.

It is composed of a forest of twenty-four thousand acres, where large and magnificent trees have resisted all attacks; but where the underwood perishes as fast as it springs up beneath the murderous tooth of the animals. A hundred and fifty mares roam at will in this vast enclosure, with their colts of one, two, and three years. These animals spend the whole year in the forest; but some support is provided for them in winter. Straw and corn is placed for them under sheds at some distance apart, and the mares come there to get food and shelter if the weather is too severe. At the proper season a dozen stallions are turned loose into the forest. These animals only remain there three or four months, after

which they are brought back to the stables and carefully attended to. The stallions of the wild breeding-stud were the best and most thorough-bred to be procured of Arab, Turkish, or English blood. One Arab of the best blood, and splendidly grown, had been purchased for five hundred pounds.

When these animals were turned out into the forest they were shining with eight months' rest and close attendance; but they did not please the mares, whose exterior was very different, and who never permitted them to approach till they were as rough and dirty as themselves. Till then the mares ran away, or united together against the dandy who preserved the demeanour of the city in the fields. But by a week's end the stallions were so disfigured, that when they returned to the stable they could hardly be recognised. The colts were captured in the forest when three years old, and brought back to the stables, where they spent two years more, and after that were sent to their destination as horses. The way of capturing the colts in the forest was called the hunt, and this hunt had its curious incidents. Some days previously, a general sweep was made, and an attempt to separate the colts they wanted to catch. Then on a given day the place they had been driven to was surrounded with beaters, using instruments for making a noise to frighten the colts into a smaller enclosure bounded by hedges. This was twice repeated, and each time the colts were made to pass from a larger to a smaller enclosure, till at last they were pushed into a defile, the only exit from which was a great farm-yard. Those intended for capture were caused to pass successively from this first yard into a smaller one filled with straw several feet thick. In spite of all these trials, the colt still retained the independence of the forest; but in this second yard he found a groom who managed, by plying a rope, to throw him

down. Once on the straw, a halter was put on him, and the two greatest delights of nature were lost: he could experience no more of liberty or love.

During this hunt the colts kept in a single troop, with the strongest and boldest at their head. A commander always sprang up among them and walked at the head of the troop, seeming to direct their evolutions. On the part of the colts, these evolutions consisted in a lengthened resistance to passing from one enclosure to another; and when their strategy was well managed, the resistance was prolonged and sustained by very dexterous movements, pleasant to witness. Very often the band turned about, passed right over the beaters, crossed the enclosures, and regained the forest. This was the case whenever a bold and clever individual had gained the command. I say clever, for once there was such a general, who made it impossible to finish the chase, which was in vain deferred to another day. Whenever he was found at his post, there was no success. Those who have witnessed these hunts will not think I have exaggerated; but I allow that nothing but sight will make any one understand with what docility the horses place themselves, in time of danger, around him who has the charge of their defence, what discipline they observe, and how much bravery and ability the commander displays. I have been present at these hunts four or five times. I was never tired of seeing this contest in some sort between the mind of man and that of the "warrior animal born of the trident."

I had long been requesting that this establishment should be abolished. I gave proofs, and to spare, that it was no longer suitable to the advanced state of society in the grand-duchy of Berg. The forest of Duisburg, if freed from the breeding stud, reclaimed and managed as it might be, would in time become a splendid and pro-

ductive property. The first year, wood to the amount of twelve hundred pounds might be sold from it, and this source of income would go on increasing. The stud furnished a hundred or a hundred and twenty horses yearly. It cost a considerable sum in materials and in the payment of persons employed, and after all only furnished horses excellent for endurance, but poor as to form; and for the same cost, twice as many might be selected from the most famous studs in Germany. These good reasons did not find favour with the Emperor; he would have the stud, because he had seen something like it in Poland, and his majesty could hardly bear to be without anything he had liked elsewhere. Before making a definite order, the Emperor had sent an inspector-general of the stud into the grand-duchy, named ——, who fulfilled his mission in a sufficiently amusing way.

This gentleman, whom the Emperor had just made baron, was head of the ancient house of ——, one of the "*quatre grands chevaux de Lorraine*,"* and which had indisputably been allied with the ancient sovereigns of the duchy. The arrival of Marie Antoinette in France made the fortune of this family, and the person in question had reached the rank of brigade-major of the body-guards of De Noailles' company very young. The officers of this company, in garrison at Troyes, came to pay their court at Brienne. I had known ——, then in his youth, when he was remarked, and was remarkable, for nothing but the arrogance inspired by his supposed relationship to the Queen. In spite of this relationship, he did not emigrate in 1792; and Dumouriez, who liked recruits of that stamp, made him soon pass through the higher grades up to that of lieutenant-general, where he was obliged to stop. He contrived to live as best as he could, sometimes in hiding, sometimes in

* Four of the noblest old families of Lorraine were known by this sobriquet.

the country, from the time when he was driven from the army as a noble, up to the Revolution of Brumaire. After this Revolution he did not apply for leave to serve: the phantasmagoria of 1792 was not in much estimation with the new chief of the army. General Beurnonville, who had known M. de —— through all these adventurous times, and the Countess de Brienne strongly recommended him to me for the post of prefect. Both of them ascribed to him the regulation amount of good qualities; and I hastily put down his name for the department of the Higher Marne, which was my own. I thought I had presented my department with a real treasure, by sending it a man of high birth, a general of division, and rich besides, who could establish a prefecture nobly; but I was mistaken in my attempt. M. de —— took it into his head to persecute the nobles and the emigrants, apparently in order to punish them for not having emigrated himself; while he paraded his sympathies to the lowest class of society, whose manners exactly suited him. Honest men were frightened, and complained of a selection for which they thought me responsible; and I managed to get M. de —— transferred from the prefecture of the Higher Marne to the bosom of the Legislative body, at a time when the opinion of its members was held in very little regard. He had not felt any gratitude to me for his nomination as prefect, as he had no difficulty in attributing it to his peculiar merit; but he never forgave me for the honour he had received in being transferred to the Legislative body, and quitted it as soon as the term of his appointment had expired. It was fortunate for him that this was at the very time when the Emperor had just married Marie Antoinette's great-niece. He put the glory of his relationship to the best use, and was appointed inspector-general of breeding-

studs. This was the man who came to me from the Emperor. He appeared in the grand-duchy with superb airs and the evident determination to treat me as a person of small account. On my side I affected to treat him with as much respect as the hero of La Mancha received at the hands of the duchess. The *grand chevau** let himself be taken in, and treated us every day to the most ridiculous specimens of vanity. He spent the morning in riding about the stud-ground, and the evening in preparing what he called luminous notes; and I trembled lest the year should not be long enough for the completion of his work. I contrived to have him followed two or three times in the forest by a troop of rascals, who kept shouting, "Long live the general! Long live the friend of the stud!" In the evening my friend had no better employment than to come and inform me of these ovations, enchanted by his popularity. At first I congratulated him; but one day I added, as if on reflection, "I do not like to see these scenes repeated, because I am not sure how the Emperor will take it if he hears of it: public applause is a thing he is very touchy about. I know very well that it is less to the friend of the stud than to *le grand chevau*, the relation of Maria Theresa; and therefore all the more will he feel a little touch of jealousy. I advise you not to go often into the forest, and to be moderate in showing yourself in public." M. de —— considered that it was very probable I might not be wrong, and determined not to remain at Düsseldorf longer than was needful to prepare his report. He asked me to lend him a clerk from my office to write from dictation, and even, if necessary, correct the faults to which all composers are liable. "For," he complaisantly told me, "you know, like me, from experience, that it is only those who never

* *Sic.*

do anything that never make mistakes." I gave him a sharp fellow for secretary, whom I advised to collect all the general's thoughts, to reduce them to some order and orthography, but to alter them as little as possible. The secretary obeyed his orders, and the result was a report, of which I piously kept a copy as one of the most curious papers of the time. The general took all manner of pains to prove that the stud was an admirable establishment in all points, and was very indignant with those who plotted its suppression. Having exhausted the resources of human eloquence, the author, after the pattern of Homer, makes the horses themselves speak.

M. de —— added, at the end, "Sire, might not the wild horses say, 'By what right does Minister Beugnot claim to drive us from a domain bequeathed to us by our sires? Let this minister do as he likes elsewhere, but allow us to live quietly at home, and labour for the glory of our invincible Emperor.'" In different places in the report were to be found kicks against me; but this last bit was the masterpiece. Wishing to part with me on friendly terms, M. de —— offered to suppress the horses' speech, as containing something too directly aimed against me. I did all I could to prevent its being suppressed. I agreed that the shaft was a little too sharp, but that was only because my name was inserted in so many letters. Let the horses say the ministers of the grand-duchy, instead of the Minister Beugnot, and there would be nothing to criticise in their speech. It contained nothing more than a warmth very pardonable in people who were going to be turned out of their home without rhyme or reason. Poor horses! M. de —— accepted the correction, and the *morceau* was preserved.

The matter of the stud came up again while the Emperor was staying at Düsseldorf. When His Majesty

spoke of it, I asked whether he had caused the report of his inspector-general of the stud to be presented to him, and was sorry to see that he knew nothing about it. No decision was come to about this stud till the next year's frightful tempest accomplished its ruin.

END OF VOL. I.

BRADBURY, EVANS, AND CO., PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

00022825

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018